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GIFT OF

Mr. Edward A. Wicher

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Mr. Edward A. Wicher

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"You like it, drink it." (*See Page 18.*)

ORIGINAL ETCHING BY WILLIAM GLACKENS.

The Works of

CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

With a General Introduction by

JULES CLARETIE

SCENES OF PARISIAN LIFE

Translated into English by

EDITH MARY NORRIS

THE FREDERICK J. QUINBY COMPANY

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A RECEIPT FOR THE MAKING OF A MARRIAGE

A LADY of my acquaintance has a mania for matchmaking. I say mania advisedly, for if she were impelled by interest, speculation or love of feasting, I could understand the avidity with which she sets about this kind of thing; but she gets no profit from it in any way,—she does not dance, she hardly eats anything. What pleasure, then, can she obtain in going to a wedding? Is it that later on she may hear the reproaches and complaints of those she has lured into the paths of matrimony, which certainly must be more frequent than the thanks of the ones she has made happy. There are some things in this world so strange as to be inexplicable and these things are exceedingly numerous.

This lady has always a great number of young ladies to provide for, young, middle-aged (one never calls them old), amiable, gentle, witty, but rarely rich; those who are so never need to take any trouble to find husbands, their only embarrassment is that of choice. But if the matches offered by Madame B—— were not well dowered on the money side of the question, they were always rich in virtues and good qualities. Unfortunately for poor young ladies, we live in an age of gold; that is to say, in an age where gold is considered the first and greatest power on earth, the underlying active

principle which puts everything in motion; and where it has the precedence over integrity and very often over ability also; and, I am obliged to confess, I believe it has been the same in all ages. The men of former times were no better in this respect than those of today, as history itself will show us. What crimes, what impostures, what knaveries have been committed, and always for gold. People cringed before those in power because they distributed favors to them, employed them, and those they employed gained much gold. "What is necessary to make war?" said Frederick the Great, "money, money, and money!"

These words of the king of Prussia might be applied to other things beside war. What must be considered, deferred to in making love to or marrying off young girls? "Money, money, and money!"

"But," you will perhaps answer me, "I have known many who had none, and for all that they married."

I admit it, there is no rule without an exception and what I am going to relate to you is a proof of it; but what troubles and trials had to be overcome before attaining one's end, and is it really attained when in order to avoid dying in celibacy one allies one's self to a being with whom one has not the slightest sympathy and who as likely as not is an object of aversion.

But we will leave these reflections, which are

leading us too far from our subject, and return to the lady who was so fond of matchmaking.

Madame B—— cannot make a match for me, since I am already married; but she never sees me without saying,—

"Can't you find me a suitable match for my little Celestine? She is such a good girl! so gentle and so amiable, such a disposition as one rarely sees; she is never in a bad temper, even when she has the toothache! Ah, how happy a husband would be with such a wife as that!"

"Has she a dowry?"

"No, I am sorry to say she has not. To tell you the truth, had she had one she would have been married ten years ago!"

"Ten years ago! How old is your little Celestine, may I ask?"

"Between twenty-seven and twenty-eight years old, but as simple and innocent as possible, I will answer for that."

"If I'm not mistaken, she is quite plain."

"Why, the idea! how unkind of you! It is true that she isn't pretty, especially since she had the smallpox, which left her with an eye that weeps continually; but it doesn't show when she is laughing. I assure you she isn't ugly; there is nothing repulsive about her and she has a pleasant smile."

"Oh, yes, she has quite an extensive smile! it shows all her gums, and her teeth, which look like wild boar's tusks."

"How you exaggerate things! Her teeth are rather long and rather yellow, I know — but none of them are decayed."

"Which is rather a pity — and then she is so scraggy."

"I confess that she isn't at all plump, and that she is rather knock-kneed; but all that doesn't prevent her from being an excellent girl, very industrious, very economical, very capable of keeping a house."

"But I don't think she would keep a husband long; knock-knees are very ugly. I know they do not prevent a woman from looking after her soup kettles, but I think they are foes to love?"

"Good heavens! my dear friend, how droll you are, what next will you say? Does one always marry for love?"

"Well, when they don't marry for that, they marry for money."

"Not at all. They marry so as not to be alone — for companionship, because they want to be married, in short."

"Oh, yes, I understand. As Béranger said, 'That I may find my slippers ready and receive some little care and attention when I come home.'"

Madame B—— had spoken handsomely, though I did not think it would be easy to marry Mademoiselle Celestine, and besides I never interfere in such matters; but one day it chanced that one of my friends said to me,—

"I know a young man who wishes to marry, can you recommend a wife to him?"

I began to laugh, for I remembered Mademoiselle Celestine, and I answered,—

"I could mention a very nice young lady, but your young man might not like her."

"Why not? He won't be hard to suit. I'll begin by telling you that he doesn't insist on money, but he wants his wife to have a trade."

"A trade?—exactly! the one I told you of is a fringe-maker."

"A fringe-maker? that would suit him. He is a government clerk, he has sixteen hundred francs salary, and moreover a little business in corks which brings him in four or five hundred francs; he wants a wife to keep his house and look after his corks while he is at his office."

"How old is your young man?"

"Oh, about thirty-six or thirty-eight."

"The deuce he is!—rather a mature young man."

"Come, my dear fellow, let us see your young lady. Devil take it, it won't cost anything to look at her, I suppose."

"I suppose not; but I can't bring you together; I will take you to a lady who is a friend of hers, who greatly desires to marry her, and you can settle it between you, for I warn you I'll have no hand in your matchmaking."

Dupont, that was the name of my friend, begged

me to take him immediately to the lady I spoke of, and I discovered that he also was fond of match-making; but I could pardon this in him, for I knew he was led by the pleasure of going to a wedding and giving himself an indigestion.

I took Dupont to Madame B——, who uttered an exclamation of delight on learning the object of our visit. She and Dupont soon understood each other as well as if they had been acquainted for eight years; their conversation was as lively and broken as that of Marivaux.

"Is your friend handsome?"

"No."

"So much the better."

"How about your young lady?"

"Her face is nothing to speak of."

"I understand, that will suit us."

"But she is industrious, gentle, obliging, economical, steady."

"Very good! any money?"

"A small trousseau and some expectations."

"That is sufficient."

"Your friend has a clerkship?"

"Sixteen hundred francs salary, and a small income from the sale of corks."

"That will suit us perfectly."

"How old is your young lady?"

"Well — she has arrived at a reasonable age."

"That again will suit us; my friend does not wish to have children."

"Celestine doesn't care about them at all."

"We must appoint an interview."

"As soon as possible."

"The day after tomorrow?"

"The day after tomorrow be it. Where?"

"At the Jardin Turc in the evening, during the concert."

"I agree to that; it's only twenty-sous entrance, my friend can surely stand that."

"Then the day after tomorrow at the Jardin Turc at eight o'clock."

"We will be there."

"I shall wear a lilac bonnet."

"That is settled, then."

Madame B—— had fixed upon me as the one who should escort her to the Jardin Turc. There was no way of getting out of it; but as I had never yet been present at an interview of this kind I did not refuse Madame B——'s request, being curious to see how it would go off.

II

Upon the appointed day, I went to Madame B——'s an hour before the time fixed for the interview, because I wanted to learn what Celestine had to say to her friend's projects, and I knew that our matchmaker was not sparing of details.

I found everything upset at Madame B——'s; I saw numberless details of the toilet, such as fichus, collarettes, artificial flowers, and some ribbons were

spread out on the sofa; the servant was running back and forth with a pair of curling tongs in her hand. However, Madame B—— herself was fully dressed.

"What is going on here?" said I, looking at all the finery which was strewn around me.

"What, my dear friend, can't you imagine? We are going to superintend the toilet of the young girl we are going to marry; we'll put the last strokes to it here, for Celestine hasn't much taste, she's really not vain enough, and I wager that she will be got up like a provincial; it is indispensable that I lend a hand to her toilet."

"Then I came too soon; I'll take myself off."

"Not a bit of it! In the first place she won't change her dress, she will have put on her very best one; and then it is of no consequence, since you haven't the slightest intentions in regard to Celestine."

"Not the slightest, I assure you."

"So you see, you may remain; it will be a good thing for Celestine to get a little used to adorning herself before a man."

"And what did she say to your project?"

"She was delighted with it—she hasn't slept or eaten since I told her! she doesn't know what she is saying or doing—in fact, she's quite lost her head."

"Poor girl! perhaps she will be less delighted when she sees the young man."

The bell was rung violently.

"Here's Celestine!" cried Madame B——, in fact the damsel in quest of a husband came into the room like one wild with fright, saying as she entered,—

"I rang a little loud perhaps, dearest, but it was because I couldn't find the bell. Since the morning I don't know what I'm doing, I can't find anything. I beg your pardon, monsieur, I didn't see you."

I looked at Celestine attentively; never had she seemed to me so ugly; she was wearing a dress of dove-colored taffeta, a cap and a bonnet on top of that, a fichu of black lace which came up to her ears; add to this a stiff and awkward carriage and eyes as red as a rabbit's.

"Why, my dear, how badly you have put your things on!" said Madame B—— running to take off Celestine's bonnet. "What an idea to dress your head like that. It's very fortunate that I told you to come early."

"I thought this bonnet was so becoming to me."

"It makes you look horrible. Gracious, your eye is weeping more than usual this evening, that's a nuisance. Have you been peeling onions?"

"Why, the idea!"

"We'll put a cluster of flowers in your hair, so as to shade your eye. You'll see. This black fichu makes you look thinner still, what were you thinking of to put on anything that makes you look

thin? As if you were not sufficiently so already. I'm going to lend you a white crossover. And why didn't you stick out your hips a little, you look like a broom handle."

"Because I don't want to wear anything false."

"What foolishness — false! false! when one hasn't the real thing one has to manufacture it, of course. Justine, bring me a good-sized bustle."

"My dearest, I dreamed last night that I saw a red horse galloping in the air."

"That's a very good sign — a red horse signifies that one will be successful in one's undertakings — he was galloping, and that means that your marriage will shortly take place."

"And then I mounted the horse —"

"That's a good sign too. Sit down there and let me do your hair over."

Madame B—— tried several flowers on Celestine's head, and each time she consulted me as to the effect.

"How do you think it looks with that jasmine?"

"Why, the jasmine isn't ugly."

"It is too pale. Let's try this red poppy. Hey, what do you say?"

"I like the poppy well enough."

"No, it is too dark. Let's see these jonquils. Do you think they look better?"

"The jonquils don't look bad."

"Oh good heavens! what was I going to do? a yellow bouquet — how very stupid of me! how

horrid! Take it off, quick! Ah, this rose, the rose is perfect, isn't it?"

"I must say the rose doesn't please me half as well."

"You are wrong. Celestine, you will wear the rose. But goodness! how your eye weeps this evening. You must lower it, do you hear?"

"And the other, my dearest?"

"You must lower the other also, that goes without saying; you would make a pretty grimace if you tried to raise one of them and lower the other. I'm going to put in two little combs and you will be charming."

The poor girl allowed her friend to do what she would to her head; but while Madame B—— was affixing the combs I heard her say, in a low tone,—

"How old did you tell them I was, my friend?"

"Twenty-eight."

"I begged you to say thirty-two."

"Leave me alone to do things well. When a woman says she's twenty-eight, people know very well that she is thirty-two."

"But I am thirty-five."

"That has nothing to do with it — provided that you don't look it."

At length the toilet was finished; Madame B—— made Celestine get up, turn about and walk up and down before her as she commented,—

"Don't hold yourself so stiff — there! Don't swing your left arm as though it was the sail of a

windmill. Very well — what do you say to it, monsieur?"

"Me! I have nothing to say — that is my opinion."

"You are very uncompromising. But it is eight o'clock; we must start."

"Eight o'clock already?" exclaimed Celestine turning pale. "Oh, my dear friend, I feel as though I should faint."

"I should advise you not to do anything so foolish, above all before the gentleman in question. A man who has only sixteen hundred francs income, and who sells corks, would not marry a woman who had the blues and fainted; a woman who wants to indulge in such nonsense must bring her husband a big dowry. Let us start."

"One moment, ladies, I must go and get a carriage first."

"That isn't necessary; it is fine and it isn't far; we can go on foot very well."

"No, I declare you shan't go on foot."

"You are too gallant altogether."

There was no gallantry in my action; but I would not go out with Mademoiselle Celestine on my arm. I thought her a fearsome object; the flowers and ribbons with which her head was adorned added to her ugliness and made it more noticeable; I dreaded the terrible moment when I should have to enter the Jardin Turc with her, and I regretted having consented to escort these ladies.

The carriage was at the door and we went down. On the staircase Celestine trod on her dress five or six times, and twice she fell on my back.

"You can see now," said I to Madame B——, "that I did well to take a carriage; Celestine would never have got to the Jardin Turc this evening."

"It is happiness which makes her lose control of her legs."

"If that woman were to be long in her present state of joy she would end by breaking her nose."

III

On arriving at our destination I saw that there was a crowd at the Jardin Turc; they were having a "concert-monstre" that evening and the concourse was considerable. I took my part bravely, drew my hat down on the nape of my neck, held up my head proudly and said to myself, "They will take us for foreigners."

I don't know what they took us for, but as we went along I heard a murmur, laughter and whisperings, which did not afford me any great amount of pleasure. I led the ladies so rapidly along that I upset several chairs, I believe I also upset an ice which a waiter was carrying; but at length we were seated. I should have liked to bury myself in a thicket, but as an appointment had been made for the parties to meet on the terrace it was obligatory to remain there.

The "concert-monstre" began, but the two ladies

hardly listened to it; they were looking round for Dupont and his friend, who had not yet arrived. I saw some young men who paused near us to contemplate Celestine; one of them said in a low tone as they went off, "She is like the concert. I am exactly of your opinion."

They played a very charming quadrille from "Venise." I had forgotten my two ladies, I was all ears, especially when some one played a delightful solo on the cornet; but in the very middle of a fine passage Madame B—— exclaimed,—

"There they are!"

This exclamation had been so loudly uttered that everybody turned to look at us, and each one muttered,—

"Here they are! what do you mean? are some princes or celebrities expected here this evening?"

Judge of the general surprise when the two gentlemen who had elicited this exclamation were seen. Dupont was an ordinary man, but his companion was worthy a description. He was a big fellow over six feet tall, who might have competed for thinness with the living skeleton exhibited on the boulevards; his head was connected with, or rather separated from, his body by a neck which would have aroused the envy of a giraffe. His skin was the color of an olive, and his nose was so flat that at a distance one could have sworn that he hadn't one. Finally, he was lame of one foot, which made him limp in a manner that was not at all graceful.

I heard laughter on all sides. "This is a monster evening," said one.

"It's better than the concert," said the other.

Meanwhile the two gentlemen had made their way to us. I had been careful to keep chairs for them, but even when seated the head of the would-be bridegroom overtopped all others.

Everybody silently exchanged the customary bows and smiles; only Madame B—— and Dupont spoke. Celestine dared not raise her eyes, and I thought she did well. The young man was silent also and I contented myself with looking on.

However, time passed; the young people still said nothing, but the gentleman when he looked at Celestine made a grimace which caused his nose to entirely disappear, and Celestine having ventured to open the eye which did not weep, in order that she might examine her future husband, also pouted in a way that did not declare her satisfaction precisely.

I saw that Madame B—— was in an ill-humor; she nudged Celestine's elbow and whispered to her,—

"Don't pinch your mouth up like that, it makes you look stupid. I didn't tell you to look only at the tip of your shoes."

"Why, I did look at something else and I should have done better not to raise my eyes."

"And why, may I ask?"

"Because I think this gentleman very ugly."

"My dear, one must not be too difficult to please when one is thirty-five and hasn't a sou. Besides, you are no better-looking than he is, if I must say so."

"That is possible, but I haven't a lame foot."

"You won't be able to see that when he's asleep."

"My husband isn't likely to be always asleep!"

"Take care lest you never have one."

While this conversation was taking place on my right, the following proceeded on my left.

"Well, my dear fellow, you haven't said anything to me about this young lady."

"Because I haven't found anything to say."

"You should have put on two cravats this evening."

"I put on three of them."

"Then you should have put on four, that would have made your neck look better. What do you think of the young lady?"

"I think she is very ugly."

"Well, I don't say she is positively pretty, but she has one of those faces to which one can get accustomed. And then her virtues, her good qualities, those are the most essential things in a household."

"Yes, but she is very ugly."

"Why, my dear fellow, you don't think yourself a Spartacus do you? with your lame foot, your long neck, and your flat nose?"

"I know perfectly well what I am, but that doesn't prevent me from having an eye for beauty."

"I advise you to have an eye for it at a distance then. For, when one has nothing more to offer it than your salary and the corks, beauty is likely to be rather stand-off."

"Then I shall not marry."

"And they'll say, 'He's not married because nobody would have him!'"

They stopped talking. Dupont was displeased, he saw the wedding feast which had loomed in the distance disappearing; Madame B—— was greatly vexed because this was the ninth match that Celestine had missed. The young man beat time with his lame foot and pretended to be occupied entirely with the music; and Celestine began to look about her, the presence of this gentleman being quite indifferent to her.

Time passed; they were playing the last piece but one of the concert. I was silently examining the two persons my friend had wished to unite in marriage, and I began to think that they were well matched. Dupont and Madame B——, on the contrary, were losing all hope of uniting them.

The most ridiculous idea came into my head, and when Dupont said to me in a piteous tone, "The thing has failed," and Madame B—— added, "There's an incompatibility of temper there," I said softly, "Perhaps!" which made them tremble with joy; then I said aloud to the whole party,—

"It occurs to me we might now be doing something better than listening to the music. Come, we'll go and sit in that shrubbery at a table. I propose that the company shall have some punch which I will supply; that will enliven us a bit, I hope, for I really think we need enlivening."

My proposition was accepted. I bravely offered my arm to Celestine (it must be confessed that a large part of the audience had dispersed), the others followed me, and I ordered a bowl of rum punch. The punch came and I poured it out.

"I'm very fond of it," said Celestine, "but I never drink it; I'm afraid it will go to my head."

"Oh, come, my dear, you needn't pretend to be so abstemious," said Madame B——, "you like it, drink it. If it goes to your head you will have to be a little idle tomorrow."

M. Pincelure, for that was the name of the big young man, exclaimed,—

"As for me, I can drink punch without ever being in the least put out. When I followed the French army to Spain I often drank it. I have a very strong head, nothing affects it."

I looked after M. Pincelure, who swallowed the punch like so much skim milk, and Celestine, who seemed to be accustomed to it and made no more ceremony about drinking it. Our bowl was not finished when I ordered a second; then, as I had foreseen, the punch began to have its effect; we were a good deal more cheerful than we had been

before coming into the shrubbery. Madame B—— hummed the "Gustave" galop which the orchestra was playing. Dupont rocked back and forth in his chair, stuffed himself with macaroons, and ogled the ladies. M. Pincelure talked at random and Celestine laughed.

"By Jove! hurrah for music," said the tall gentleman, "it sets one a-going. I don't dance because of my lame foot, but I like dancing all the same. Only once did I risk dancing a galop, then I fell on my partner and half the couples fell on top of us."

"I can't dance in time," said Celestine, "I have no ear, and I mix up all the figures and put the other dancers out. But I don't often have that trouble; when I go to a ball I am always a wall-flower, no one invites me to dance."

"And they always refuse me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The gentlemen call me — well, I don't like to tell you what they call me."

"The ladies call me a giraffe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's going on well," whispered Madame B——, while I continued to fill the glasses.

"He's more amiable than I had thought at first," whispered Celestine, speaking of M. Pincelure.

"She seems like a very good sort," said the big gentleman, speaking of Celestine.

I was careful to enliven the conversation.

"Monsieur," said I, addressing Pincelure, "you are modest, but you must confess that a lame foot doesn't prevent one from having love adventures."

"That is possible, but as to me, mine have never had agreeable conclusions. Once somebody appointed to meet me in a narrow street; I waited there for two hours and ended up by being watered in a very disagreeable fashion. Another time I was talking with a lady, and all at once she said to me, 'There's my husband, we must get away,' and she set off running. I tried to do the same, but I fell in the middle of the street and was beaten by the husband. Decidedly, I must renounce love."

"And what about marriage?"

"I must do the same by that more positively still. An old fortune-teller told me that if I ever married I should be a —"

"A what?"

"I should be, oh, hang it — these ladies understand what I mean."

The ladies laughed heartily, Celestine so much that she cried, which improved her looks because it equalized her eyes; M. Pincelure never once stopped talking, except when he put his glass to his lips, which happened very often.

We had passed more than an hour in this manner under the bushes; the concert was ended, we were not noticed; we were having a "monstre"

conversation which replaced the music; Celestine continued to repeat,—

"Why he is quite a pleasant person, is this tall gentleman!"

And M. Pincelure kept on saying,—

"This young lady doesn't look half so bad when one sees her in the shade."

Suddenly two big drops of rain fell into our punch.

"Good heavens! here is a storm," exclaimed Madame B——, "and I've got on my pretty lilac bonnet."

"And I my very best dress," said Celestine, still laughing.

"Come under the tents, ladies, you will be under shelter; and perhaps it will pass off."

"I don't think it will pass off," said I, "besides, it is half past eleven and it would be much the better plan to make sure of a cab."

"Half-past eleven. Gracious! how the time has flown."

M. Pincelure had taken Celestine's arm to lead her to a tent, and when they got there, it might be from forgetfulness, it might be from premeditation, but Celestine left her hand within the tall gentleman's arm.

The storm increased. I ran to the gate, but I could only see one cab. I engaged it and returned to my party.

Dupont and Madame B—— were occupied in

turning up, the one her gown, and the other his trousers, so as to protect them from the rain; I made a sign to M. Pincelure from a distance; he came running with Celestine, I made them come out of the garden, I pushed them towards the cab, and made them get into it.

"But Madame B——," stammered Celestine.

"Don't be uneasy about her; her dwelling is in a different direction, I will take her home."

"But M. Dupont?"

"He's already well on his way."

"But —"

"But —"

I did not listen further; I shut the door of the cab on them. The punch, the storm, my hurrying them, had all made them confused; and the cabby, to whom I had given Celestine's address, had made his horses start before they knew where they were.

I returned to Madame B——.

"Where is Celestine?" she demanded. "What have you done with her?"

"I've just married her."

"Oh, what a good joke!"

"I'll wager now that she will espouse M. Pincelure."

"Really! But where are they? Come, tell me?"

"Gone off in a cab, the pair of them."

"In a cab together — what have you done? Have you no regard for decency?"

"What makes you think it will be outraged? Besides, when a marriage is to follow one may well excuse a small thing like that. And I wager again, that a marriage will take place. For instance, it will cost you a muddy dress and a slightly dampened bonnet, for the cab they have taken is the last one — there isn't another on the boulevard."

"I regret nothing if you are successful! but I must confess that I have never yet seen a marriage made in that fashion."

IV

A month later my prediction was fulfilled; Celestine became Madame Pincelure. I do not know whether the horoscope of the fortune-teller was fulfilled also; all the probabilities were against it.

This is the one solitary instance of my being mixed up in the arranging of a marriage; many people break their necks and lose much valuable time in order to arrive at this end — my receipt is, however, very simple, and for it nothing is necessary but two bowls of punch.

ON THE CANAL BANKS

WE have old Paris, modern Paris, and gothic Paris; we have also neighborhoods in Paris which aspire to be of the Renaissance, of which the denticulated houses, the crenellated walls, and the arched and pointed windows, are supposed to recall the times of Francis I. We have some new streets laid out by rule and line; a pavement on which anybody may fall without hurting himself; flagstones which break, but which are not used; sidewalks on which the wheels of carriages often roll, which is rather unsafe for the passers-by but is very handy for the cabbies; we have gas which shames the ancient lanterns, but which has never shamed the moon; we have beautiful shops with ugly signs; stunning cafés, resplendent with glass and gilding, and lights which appear and disappear like Seraphin's marionettes; we have fashionable bakers, where one can get little cakes, cream, wine, liqueurs — in fact everything except bread. We no longer have beggars, but we have an infinite number of street fakirs who sell cures for the toothache and other ills, and of poor women who sing and carry a half-dressed baby in their arms meanwhile; in fact we have a great many things in Paris — we are very rich; the most prejudiced person can make no mistake at all as to that.

But what we have had for some years back, what

is only now beginning to assume the aspect of a promenade, of a neighborhood of Paris; what you do not know, perhaps, if you live in the noble Faubourg or the rich neighborhood of the Bourse, but which you will know probably in another twenty years, if you live so long, are the banks of the canal, those new quays which begin after La Villette basin and stretch as far as the old ditches of the Bastile.

The canal banks were for a long time deserted, lonely, muddy, even dangerous; there are still a great many parts of the banks where I would not advise you to walk alone at eleven o'clock in the evening with nothing but an umbrella in your hand; but in many others fine houses have been built which seem to raise themselves proudly and splendidly beside the ramshackle hovels of the market gardeners which are still standing here and there.

They have planted poplars all along the canal; the poplars, which prefer the water to gas pipes, are much better grown and more flourishing than those on the boulevards in the interior of the city, where, in some years, one would have been hard put to it to find a tree that was doing well, owing to the pipes which surrounded their roots.

The canal banks afford a very curious scene, lively and cheerful when the sun shines; it is the country part of Paris. You may see there immense vessels filled with coal, little amateur barks, the vigilant washerwomen who, with bodies half

bent over the water, work and chatter, making fun of the passers-by, and pointing out to each other the good bourgeois who is giving his dog a swim.

Here is a thrifty housewife who comes to see the coal she is buying measured before her; lower down, a poor woman, on her knees near the edge of the water, is washing, often without soap, her children's garments; a little farther off is a gentleman who is walking back and forth, coming and going, always towards the same neighborhood, who pauses, looks at his watch, makes an impatient movement and begins to walk again; from the elegant appearance of this gentleman you infer at once that he is not in his proper neighborhood; that he is an exotic being is recognized at the first glance; if he has come to the banks of the canal it is only in the hope of meeting there no one whom he knows except the lady he is expecting, but with whom he would not like to be seen elsewhere. The banks of the canal are very convenient trysting places; one can discern one's friends when they are still far off.

Near the Faubourg du Temple the banks of the canal are very crowded and almost brilliant; there are at that point famous Vendanges de Bourgogne, where one may gather grapes all the year round. There is also a relay of omnibuses, a watch box with one sentinel, some venders of gingerbread, some stray dogs. It looks like an imitation Pont-Neuf. A little farther on you see the huge bonded

warehouses so well placed on the banks of the canal, and which receive the merchandise from the ship which carries it, as in Venice the custom-house officers receive the travellers who are still in the lagoons.

But what is going on down there? Quite a crowd of people has assembled. Is it a man who has shot himself? Is it a street arab who is bathing in spite of the ordinance? Is it an amateur fishing? Is it a dog swimming? Is it some mysterious object which they see floating in the water and in regard to which they are making their conjectures? Why, no, it is simply the bridge turning to let a big vessel through.

You will see the crowd thicken on each bank and the vehicles form a line. Then you will be obliged to hear such conversations as these which take place on both sides of the water, often between people who do not know each other; but one soon makes acquaintance on the canal banks.

"My dear lady, just imagine my vexation," says an old woman muffled in a shapeless cap, her body wrapped in an old scarf which looks exactly like bed-ticking; her feet clad in old furred slippers, over which she has put a big pair of shoes and to which she has attached pattens, so that as she walks the dame makes nearly as much noise as a horse. The lady also has on her arm an enormous market-basket, in which there is the material for a pot-au-feu, some butter, a three-volume novel,

some trout, a large package of cloves, some cat's meat, two skeins of thread, a loaf of coffee bread, some onions, a bottle of blacking and a toothbrush.

The person whom she addresses is a stout, motherly woman sixty years old or thereabouts, who is so stout that one might compare her in size to the columns they have built on the boulevards, and whose figure is exactly like a feather-bed tied in the middle; there is in her dress and in the arrangement of her hair something of pretension, of vanity even, as though she thought to make an impression even now. Her dress, which is rather short, discloses two posts covered with black woollen hose and a foot which looks horribly squeezed in a very well-blacked shoe; her head is covered with a cap with barbes floating in the breeze and trimmed with immense bows of ribbon which were once pink; this structure is perched very far back on her head, perhaps intentionally, perhaps blown there by the high wind, and shows a red, pimpled face, with two enormous tufts of black hair as glistening as her shoes, in curls made to resist rain and wind.

"This is very unfortunate for me," says the little old woman who carries the basket, addressing the stout lady who has stopped beside her, "and on this of all mornings, when I am a little late owing to the play being so long last night, that in Belleville no one can recall such a prolonged representation."

"Madame is an actress at the Belleville theatre?" asks the stout motherly woman, looking with more interest at the person who spoke to her.

"No, not I, my dear, but my daughter — a pretty brunette whose appearances have made so much noise that they talk of nothing else in the whole neighborhood; you must have seen her, she made her first appearance in 'Cidre,' and she takes the part of Chimène. I am Chimène's mother and I dare say she will make me famous; everybody looks at me as I go by just as they do at my daughter and I hear them whispering, 'That's Chimène's mother, her real mother.' How fortunate it is to have children who are the pride of our declining years; my daughter will go from Belleville to the Français or at least to Franconi's, especially as she has a liking for tumbling, and she rides a donkey very well. But to come back to what I was saying, we woke very late this morning, and this is positively the day for pot-au-feu. We are as regular as clockwork — twice a week we have beef — the broth is necessary for my daughter, it is a necessary part of her diet. I dressed hurriedly to get to market. I got some trout too, Chimène likes them very much. I say Chimène by force of habit — she has been so applauded in that part and everybody made her a complimentary call after 'Cidre'; there was no one except the author that I did not see, and he had not even the politeness to send her a letter of congratulation.

I thought that rather disobliging on his part. I hope my daughter will remember it when he writes another play, if he offers her a part."

"Did you have to pay much for your fish?"

"Don't ask me, it's enough to make one cry; that is to say, my dear, that if the price of it keeps up we shan't be able to eat it any longer."

"Are they never going to get this ship through?"

"What an immense one; it must have come from the sea. What is it loaded with?"

"Marble, they say."

"What nonsense! they can't carry marble on the water, it is too heavy, it would sink; they needn't tell the mother of an actress such things as that! To come back to what I was telling you, I went to get my provisions and then I thought I would go to my bookseller's to get something to read this evening — I should never go to sleep if I didn't have a book in my hand. I don't know what he has given me. Have you read this?"

"'Victor, or the Child of the Forest?' No, is it new?"

"He told me it had just come out, and the minute I saw the title — a child and a forest — I was satisfied; I said to myself, 'It is impossible that it shouldn't be interesting — emotional.'"

"The ship isn't moving."

"Why do they make the bridges so narrow. They might leave enough room for passers-by and the ships too."

"Ah, there's a man jumping on the vessel that he may get across quicker — that's very imprudent — and he's an old man too. Now he's going to climb up on to the other side. Ah, he's done it — that's a man who's got his sea legs on. To come back to what I was telling you, what makes me most uneasy is that I left my milk on the fire and it's had plenty of time to foam over and be all dried up."

"Isn't your daughter there to watch it?"

"Why, do you suppose I would want to see Chimène bother herself about the details of the household? In the first place she has to study her parts, that's a good deal more in her sphere. I shall have to buy some milk, besides, for I intended to make her some potato cakes presently, my Chimène is passionately fond of them. Ah, there's the bridge turning now, that's a good thing, but who's pushing like that? Do they think there won't be any room left for them in the Faubourg du Temple? Why, that is my neighbor, M. Grosmignon, one of our steady theatregoers, who always brings Chimène oranges with verses — in the season. Where are you running to like that, neighbor? He doesn't pay any attention to me — he must be in a great hurry. Perhaps he left some milk on the fire. Oh, when I pass over one of these movable bridges it always has such a funny effect upon me to feel the ground swaying beneath me, it always gives me the shivers. I don't think

I could ever be well in a country where there were earthquakes. Do they affect you like that, my dear?"

The stout, motherly woman to whom this question is addressed, and who walks upon the bridge with as much unconcern as the townswoman, answers smiling,—

"I never even totter; I have never once fallen in my life."

"That's lucky for her," remarks a workman who is passing by; "for who would want to pick her up?"

Chimène's mother has crossed the bridge, as has also the fat lady; the latter turns to the right while the first goes up the Faubourg, shouting to her new acquaintance,—

"You live in the Rue Folie-Mericourt, where they have a hospital for sick dogs; my cousin has just put her spaniel there. You must come to Belleville when Chimène plays."

Let us leave these ladies to return to their homes; let us leave a crowd of government employees who live in Belleville, to hasten to cross the bridge so as not to be late in returning to their offices; this walk must be quite fatiguing to those who live near the Parc Saint-Fargeau, and work at the Treasury or the offices of the Minister of War; but at Belleville one can live very cheaply and one has a "little garden."

This little garden is particularly affected by

clerks and people who are obliged during the day to busy themselves with figures and writing; they say to themselves, "A garden is very restful after the fatigue of the day's work, the rush of business; one can there breathe the perfume of the flowers and roll on the grass as well as if one were in the country." It is these little gardens which take to Belleville or Batignoles a great many people who, but for them, would be living in Paris.

And in truth is there anything more delightful than a garden, for a person who has only a few hours after dinner to recreate himself. You leave your office at half-past five, if you are fortunate enough to leave so early. If you live "extra muros" you reach home very tired; you dine, that is the first thing essential, and without giving yourself time to drink your coffee, you go into your "little garden" to see how a shrub that you planted the evening before is getting on. You find the plant in very bad shape, the branches are drooping, the leaves are fading; you think it lacks water, you hasten to your soft-water conduit if you have one, to your rain-water butt if you have no conduit, you fill your watering-pots, and you restore life and verdure to your shrub; then, while you are at it, you find you must also water your dahlias, your rose-bushes, your strawberries, and your grass, in short, water is needed everywhere, and you flourish your watering-pot with a zeal worthy of a Cincinnatus, you empty your conduit or your butts. When you

have finished this, you take your pruning shears — every individual who has a garden, however small it may be, has a pair of pruning shears — you examine all your trees and cut the dead or objectionable branches and if you wish you can always find something to cut. Besides, you have bought pruning shears and you must use them.

When you have cut, pruned and trimmed to your heart's content, you amuse yourself by scraping off the moss that has gathered on your fruit trees, and if you set yourself to it conscientiously and wish to clean a tree thoroughly you can spend a couple of hours over a very small peach tree; you certainly cannot scrape all your trees in one evening. You see that the fertilizer that you bought to enrich your soil and make your plants grow is not well mixed with the earth; you go to look for your spade and you set yourself to turning over the soil; you spade, and from time to time you take out the stones that you find; you put them in a heap and when the perspiration is pouring down your forehead (one easily gets overheated when digging) you go and look for your wheelbarrow to take away your stones; if you have no wheelbarrow, you take your little boy's or your little girl's; for in a small garden one can get along with a small wheelbarrow, but one must make four journeys instead of one.

Hardly have you disposed of your wheelbarrow, when down you go on your knees to pull out the

weeds and wire-grass that are choking your plants; after a time you find you are no longer able to distinguish good plants from bad; it is because the dusk has surprised you while still gardening. You rise, you make a horrible grimace; your wife asks you what is the matter with you — one who owns a small garden, necessarily has a wife and children — and you tell her that your back is very bad. She scolds you because you tire yourself too much gardening; as your only answer you demand the rake, and you continue to rake your paths until it is quite dark. And I once knew a gentleman who attached a lantern to his rake, and exercised himself in this way while his family slept.

Finally you put aside the rake. Your wife says to you in a tender voice — nearly all women have tender voices when their husbands are tired — "Come in and rest, my dear; come and sit down under the arbor, you have worked long enough."

You yield to your wife's insistence and you go and sit down under the arbor; for however small the garden, there must be an arbor there. Sometimes it is true the vine or the honeysuckle which one has planted around it obstinately refuses to climb on the trellis, to ornament the top with its leaves; which is often the reason there is no shade under your arbor; but all the same, you go and take refuge in it during the very hot weather, and while sweltering in the sun you are content if you can but say, "I am under my arbor."

But even there you must not imagine that our amateur gardener yields to the sweetness of repose; he remembers that he needs some supports for his dahlias; he takes his pruning knife, and begins to cut and pare some large pieces of wood which will serve to protect his flowers against the "simoon" of the neighborhood. When at length, overwhelmed with fatigue, he decides to go to bed, he is firmly resolved to find relief from the strain of office work in his little garden at break of day, before it is time for him to go to Paris.

To the amateur gardeners who do not wish to go so far afield as Belleville or Batignolles to seek relaxation, I would say that there are little gardens all along the canal, and that they do not need watering often; all one has to fear, on the contrary, is that they will be watered too much.

Let us follow the course of the water; this neighborhood is not inhabited by the aristocracy. Some rich retired people who wish to enjoy the sight of the water have, however, taken apartments in some new houses which have been built, but in general it is the working classes who people these new quays; and those who walk there wear their morning garb, their working clothes and workshop blouses. People in conventional dress are noticeable; when they come there, it is probably not the walk alone which attracts them.

With night, the banks of the canal assume a calm and peaceful aspect, which is not without

charm to those who wish to meditate or to talk unobserved. Gas does not as yet illumine it, and when the moon does not think fit to show herself one must walk cautiously on these banks, which are not yet completely paved, and which only have sidewalks here and there.

You will meet drunkards; drunkards are very fond of walking by the water, but they rarely fall in; they stagger along, not in the middle of the road, that would be too tame for them, but quite on the edge of the bank; they sway about continually, and one would imagine he saw a tight rope dancer, walking without balancing. One trembles for them, then one remembers that there is a special providence for drunkards, lovers, and children.

It is growing late and there are fewer saunterers. What young couple is this walking so slowly and often stopping to talk, never unlinking their arms, gazing so attentively at each other that they often splash themselves in the gutter because neither one nor the other of them ever thinks of looking to see where they are going to?

The young man wears a cloth jacket, canvas trousers, an otter-skin cap on his head; he must be a workman. The woman has on a cotton print gown, a striped apron, a very simple cap, in which, however, she looks very pretty; she must be a grisette.

"Jenny," says the young man, tenderly pressing

the arm which rests so confidingly in his, "be easy, don't grieve — your brother will not go, you can reassure your mother; her son Julien whom she loves so much will not be obliged to leave her."

"But, Pierre, how can it be helped? My brother drew an unlucky number in the conscription, he must go, he must be a soldier; how do you think he can become exempt? We have not the wherewithal to buy a substitute; I've economized as much as possible, but embroidery brings in so little — and then my mother is often ill. I don't want her to sit up at night and tire herself all out with work. My poor mother, she is so fond of Julien; she will be inconsolable when he is gone. Suppose it should kill her? for she loves my brother much better than she does me, and I could never console her for his absence."

As she says these words, the young girl covers her eyes with her hand; but the young man exclaims,—

"Once more, Jenny, don't cry; your brother shall stay with you — with your mother. I will take his place — I have drawn in the conscription for two years past and did not draw a number — and I haven't a relation to regret me, nor a mother to kiss me every night and care for me during the day, so you see that I can very well go."

"You, Pierre! you become a soldier? you take Julien's place? Oh, no, you shall not go — for

you love me, Pierre, and you know very well that I love you."

"It is for that reason, Jenny, that I should do all in my power to render you happy. Your mother doesn't like me much; when I told her that I wished to be your husband, she said to me, 'You don't earn enough money, you haven't a good trade.' However, it isn't so bad to be a cabinet-maker; above all, when one is industrious. But there, no matter; I am going to take Julien's place, I am decided as to that. It was to tell you so that I asked you to meet me here. I only wanted to pray you to love me still and not to forget me. When I come back your mother will not refuse to let you marry me, for she will remember that through me she was able to keep her son with her."

"Oh, Pierre, what you are doing for us is very kind. And if I am not faithful to you I shall be the most ungrateful of women. How happy my mother will be! how pleased! I must go at once and tell her that my brother need not leave her."

"Yes, go, Jenny, go at once and make my resolution known to her. Tomorrow I will come and bid her good-by, and I hope she will receive me better."

"Oh, Pierre! how good you are! I am very pleased — but very sad too."

"Good-by for the present, Jenny; go back to your mother."

The two young people stop. Jenny presses

Pierre's hand and turns as if to leave him, then she comes towards him again, murmuring another good-by. She seems ready to kiss the man who has made so noble a sacrifice; but the young workman looks at her tenderly, and goes off without kissing her. He fears to seem to ask a price for his good action.

Let us go on again; a little further along, on a very gloomy part of the quay, do you not notice a gentleman dressed fashionably, with lemon-colored gloves and a carved cane, who seems to lead rather than to walk with a young woman whose very becoming dress and stylish carriage easily show that she lives in the d'Antin neighborhood?

The lady disengages her arm and says,—

"Where are you taking me to, Alfred? this is a very lonely, very unpleasant-looking place. What a singular walk for you to have chosen. You always have such queer ideas. I don't wish to go any farther, I want to go back to the boulevard where we left our carriage."

The gentleman keeps hold of the lady's arm and says to her, in a voice which he tries to render solemn,—

"Stay, Amanda, stay; this place is fitting for what I have to say to you and for the project I have formed."

"I tell you I am frightened here!"

"Am I not with you?"

"All the more reason for my fear. For some

time past, I don't know what you have in your mind, but you are not nice at all."

"Amanda, it is because I am thinking, reflecting."

"I don't like men who reflect."

"I am pondering a very serious problem."

"Which you could just as well communicate to me elsewhere — at the theatre, for instance. I should be quite willing to go and see the 'Pilules du Diable' this evening."

"Amanda, there is no question of 'Pilules'; what I want to propose to you here is better than that. Not only shall you know my project, but you can help me to execute it. Listen to me, Amanda; I have now been acquainted with you for a year, we have loved each other, we have tasted together all the joys of life; you have a fortune, and I have one also, which has permitted us to satisfy all our fancies, all our caprices even; plays, balls, concerts, promenades, soirées, cards, dress, horses, dinners, restaurants, we have exhausted them all, and having exhausted all that life has to offer that is most attractive we have nothing more to expect — let us end our lives suddenly, let us leave in a way that will cause every one to talk about us, to read about us in the papers. Let us throw ourselves into the canal locked in each other's arms."

"How horrible! what a frightful idea. Well, yours is a pretty plan, indeed! And it was to tell me this that you brought me to the canal banks?

Why, it is shameful! Let go of my arm, M. Alfred; let go of me at once, or I shall call the guard."

"What, Amanda, doesn't the idea of dying with me delight you?"

"No, monsieur, it doesn't delight me at all. You have gone mad or foolish, my dear friend. You haven't been able to make people talk about you while you were living, and you want they should talk about you after you are dead. They will say you were an idiot for killing yourself, and though that may be what you want it doesn't tempt me at all."

"But Amanda, to die together in each other's arms — floating on the water."

"For shame with you! I have no desire to float on the water. All is over between us. I should never dare again to be alone with a man who wants to kill himself, who dares propose to me that I should throw myself in the canal. Take a spaniel to bear you company, monsieur, he will accept your offer because he has the ability to get out of the water and leave you there; but as for me — go back with you, never! I forbid you in the future to come to my house; besides, I shall take care to warn the porter against admitting you."

"Amanda, please, listen to me!"

"Don't come near me, or I shall call somebody; I'll have you arrested Goodness, M. Alfred; Werthers and Antonys are all very well on the stage, but they should never pass the footlights."

As she finishes these words the young lady takes her course through one of the streets that lead to the boulevard, and M. Alfred remains alone on the banks of the canal, quite out of countenance at the ill-success of his proposition. He walks about for some time in an undecided manner; suddenly he goes towards the water, he steps over the chains, approaches the edge of the bank and leans over — is he going to throw himself in? No, he pulls out his handkerchief, blows his nose, and going back faster than he had come, regains the boulevard, muttering to himself, "I shall wait till I can find a woman who will bear me company."

We will let this madman, this fool go, who thinks he has exhausted the pleasures, the enjoyments of life, and who has perhaps never succored the unfortunate, never known a son's kiss, never felt his heart beat for his country. Such men as these kill themselves that people may read of their death later on in a "Fait Paris." When ridicule has overtaken this new folly, it will be less contagious.

But it is now midnight, the banks of the canal are deserted; but who is this little girl who runs alone, half-dressed, all along this quay? She cannot be more than twelve years old; her pale, intelligent face expresses sorrow, despair even; big tears fall from her eyes and broken words escape her lips.

"Where are you going to, my child?" says a

gentleman who happens to be in the little girl's path, and who is struck by the disorder of her dress and the agitation of her features. "Where are you running alone so late?"

"I don't know, monsieur."

"What! you don't know where you are going?"

"No, monsieur, but I am going away for I can't stay. I can't see mamma beaten, it makes me feel too sorry."

"Come, compose yourself and tell me all your trouble."

"Oh, monsieur, my father came home late and he was tipsy and very ugly — and he beat mamma; she cried, and I came away, monsieur, for I cannot bear to see mamma cry. I will never go back home. No, I will never go back there."

And the little girl is about to run off again, to walk she knows not where; her heart revolts already at an injustice, her young head is excited, and the imagination of twelve years cannot understand that any one can stand coldly by and witness suffering which they cannot soften. Will she be sensitive as a woman, she who feels so keenly as a child?

The gentleman has some trouble in making the young girl understand that her flight would augment her mother's grief and that her duty is to stay with her parent and share her sorrow.

The child has gone in, and no one passes along the edge of the water but some lovers, drunkards,

thieves, or some dwellers in the neighborhood, who are late coming home, perhaps because they have been to a theatre where they play three dramas and two vaudevilles during the evening, which is highly imprudent when one lives on the canal banks.

THE MYSTERIOUS MARK

YOU must know that Mademoiselle Adelinde Desroseau was full forty years of age, and had what are termed the fine remains of a woman, but women in general prefer new trifles to fine remains; men have no taste for them.

Mademoiselle Adelinde at twenty years of age had been surrounded by men eager to pay their homage, to flatter, to charm; they had all been eager to please her, to obtain her favor, a glance, a smile, or even a contra-dance. Then it had only remained with the young girl to make her choice and take a husband. She had not made her choice, or she had made too many of them — at least, so said the evil tongues; at any rate she had not married.

At thirty Mademoiselle Adelinde was still very good-looking. She had lost her parents and in consequence enjoyed full liberty. She did not lack admirers, and perhaps found it very pleasant to

discard those who wearied her to choose anew; Mademoiselle Adelinde had still forgotten to take a husband.

She thought of it, however, later on when she no longer saw around her the supplicants for her favor. She had passed her fortieth year without perceiving it and thought it very extraordinary that others had perceived it. Mademoiselle Adelinde believed herself the same as at twenty, she was sure that her heart had not changed, that it was as inflammable, as loving as in former times. No one took any exception to this, but they left her heart to feed on its own flames.

Mademoiselle Adelinde said to herself, "I want a husband, I must have one, young or old, ugly or handsome, no matter what or who so long as I have some one to love. However, I should greatly prefer him to be young and pleasing. I have two thousand francs income, that is not a fortune, but still it is something. Come, I must try some great expedients, and since no one among my acquaintances is minded to marry me I must advertise in the 'Petites-Affiches.' After all that is as good a way as any. They advertise a good many hotels and châteaux in it, and I don't see why they shouldn't advertise a woman; certainly I don't pretend to be of as much value as a château. Now to compose my announcement and have it inserted."

Mademoiselle Adelinde set herself to this duty,

and some days later people read in the "Petites-Affiches,"—

A middle-aged lady of very pleasing appearance, well-educated, accustomed to the best society, and possessed of two thousand francs income, wishes to marry as soon as possible. Address the party herself, from noon to four o'clock. Ask for Mademoiselle A——.

This announcement was followed by the exact address of Mademoiselle Adelinde who, never doubting that the "Petites-Affiches" would send her a crowd of aspirants to her hand, dressed herself carefully every day, and from midday to four o'clock did not venture to leave her apartments for fear of missing her husband.

But alas, whether it was that the "Petites-Affiches" had lost its vogue among Parisians, or whether the latter, too often deceived by lying advertisements, were unwilling to expose themselves to be again taken in, poor Adelinde was let in for four months' expenses for her toilet and the insertion of her notice; no one came to see this damsel who desired to marry so promptly — no one — not even those old gadabouts, those curious fellows who, because time hangs heavy on their hands, will go anywhere where there is something to be seen gratis.

Mademoiselle Adelinde was vexed, she bewailed her fate, she got angry; she was on the point of tears, but refrained, remembering that crying would

spoil her eyes. She sat down in front of her mirror, examined herself, and exclaimed,—

"They won't even come to see me, the idiots! if they did I should very soon be married, I am sure; for I am good-looking, I am still very good-looking — I think I am even better looking than I was at twenty — I have gained in some things."

Mademoiselle Adelinde placed her head in her hands and reflected for a few moments, then she muttered,—

"I want a husband — I must have one."

Suddenly an idea came to her, one of those happy inspirations, unique, divine, which poets, composers, and painters often await uselessly during whole weeks, and which they had much better not wait for at all, because inspiration is a word invented by the idle, who thereby lose their time and accomplish nothing.

Mademoiselle Adelinde rewrote her announcement, and after these words, "Address the party herself from noon to four o'clock," she added, "To those who come without having had time to breakfast, Mademoiselle A—— will willingly offer something."

"With this addition to my advertisement I am quite sure that some people will come to me," said Mademoiselle Adelinde to herself. "They will see me, and that is all I wish," and she hurried to the office of the "Petites-Affiches," where she paid for her new notice.

This novel expedient was completely successful; on the same day on which the article appeared, several men presented themselves to see the lady who desired to marry, and all confessed that they had forgotten to breakfast. Mademoiselle Adelinde did the honors of her table with infinite grace, to one she offered pasty, to another fowl. She made herself amiable, she talked. The gentlemen ate and drank; they seemed delighted with her, and there was not one of them who on leaving did not seem disposed to marry her.

The next day the crowd of visitors was more considerable; and on the day after that the number was still further increased. Mademoiselle Adelinde was obliged to keep an open dining-room; all these gentlemen had confounded appetites. The pasty and fowl were insufficient, Mademoiselle Adelinde did not know what to do first; her house had become a restaurant, and if it continued she would bring down all restaurateurs' prices to twenty-five sous.

The poor lady began to see that her income would not hold out if she went at this pace. The aspirants to her hand who still came without having had time to breakfast would soon leave her without a sou, and then it was probable she would find it still harder to marry. Besides the conduct of these visitors was sometimes outrageously unconventional; they not only came to eat, but they also drank without stint, and the porter's assistance

was sometimes necessary to induce them to leave the place.

Mademoiselle Adelinde one day suppressed the fowl, the next day the pasty; in fact she ended by offering a glass of water only to those who desired to take something. The number of visitors followed the same gradation as that of the comestibles; they ceased entirely when it came to the glass of water.

"Men are monsters, unworthy beings, carnivorous brutes," said Mademoiselle Adelinde to herself, when she found herself alone before her mirror. "They came, they saw me, they have eaten and drunk, and not one of them has really thought of marrying me. What conduct in the nineteenth century, which boasts so much enlightenment, progress, and civilization! To come and sponge on a poor lady and not even to kiss her hand. The base deceivers! But all the same I want a husband; I will and must have one — I have settled that in my mind. Let me think of another expedient and one which shall prove less expensive!"

Mademoiselle Adelinde again put her head in her hands and set her wits to work; suddenly she uttered an exclamation of joy and jumped off her chair as she cried,—

"This time I am bound to be successful! this will prove unfailing. I know these men — they will want to know — but that is where I shall fool them. Quick! let me rewrite my announcement."

And Mademoiselle Adelinde striking out the breakfast, put in its place, "The person who wishes to marry, thinks that she ought to warn those who present themselves with marriage as their object, that she has, four inches above the left garter, a mark of the most wonderful beauty. Mademoiselle A—— wears her garter above the knee."

This new notice was carried to the "Petites-Affiches" and she awaited the result with considerable anxiety.

Again visitors presented themselves; these latter were something more amiable than those who only came to eat; they arrived with smiles on their lips and a sprightly and gracious manner; they talked, they joked, then they led the conversation to the mysterious mark and exhibited their desire to see it.

But that was where Mademoiselle Adelinde was ready for her company. She then assumed an expression of greater reserve, she compressed her lips and answered as she lowered her eyes, "My husband alone will see it."

"But, mademoiselle, it is perfectly natural that one should want to see it before engaging one's self."

"Nevertheless, monsieur, no one will see it until after the marriage."

"Then, mademoiselle, why did you have that notice put in the 'Petites-Affiches'?"

"Because I did not wish to deceive anyone, monsieur, and was quite willing to warn those who wanted to marry me that I had a little peculiarity above the left garter."

These answers piqued the curiosity of the visitors. They pressed, they insisted, they demanded at least some details. But Mademoiselle Adelinde turned a deaf ear to all their prayers, all their arguments; she would let them see nothing; several of these gentleman returned the next day in the hope of being more fortunate.

Matters remained at this point. Mademoiselle Adelinde received numberless visits, but she had not yet found a husband, because the French are distrustful and always suspect jokes even in the most serious matters.

Everybody talked a good deal in society about the mysterious mark of this damsel who was so desirous of marrying. They laughed and joked about it,—

"It's some trap," the young men would say. But they wished greatly to see it, and they got into disputes over it and even betted on it; each one hoped to be more fortunate than those who had preceded them. The handsome bachelors thought that the lady would never be able to resist them, that she would let them see her sign. So they would go to call on Mademoiselle Adelinde, they went to expense in their dress, they tried to surpass each other in gallantry and amia-

bility, but their efforts were in vain, they were obliged to come away without having seen anything. Mademoiselle said to herself,—

"In the end one of them will marry me, if not for love it will be out of curiosity."

One fine day an Englishman, who came to Paris in the unique hope of amusing himself, heard tell of Mademoiselle Adelinde and her mark. He thought at first it was a joke, but the "Petites-Affiches" convinced him. This Englishman had a good deal of conceit and, like all of his nation, he desired above all to surpass the French in a thousand things.

"Demmit," said Sir Hastings to himself, "all these young men of Paris have been unsuccessful in their attempts to see the mysterious mark on this lady; as for me I'm going to be a little sharper than they, and I wager that I shall accomplish my object satisfactorily."

Sir Hastings bought the "Petites-Affiches," took a cab, and had himself driven to the address indicated in the paper. He went first to the porter.

"You have in this house, I believe, a young lady who has a sign?"

The porter looked at the Englishman, opening his big, stupid eyes wide as he said,—

"A 'cygne?'[1] Oh, no. There are some ladies who have dogs or cats but I don't know one who has a cygne."

[1] "Cygne," a swan.

"I tell you that you have in the house a mature little girl — middle-aged — who has a mysterious mark above the garter."

"A mysterious mark? what do you mean by that?"

"A sign, a peculiar mark — something that one doesn't show — do you understand? You are stupid."

The porter did not understand in the least; at length the Englishman thought to show him the advertisement in the "Petites-Affiches" and the porter remembered Mademoiselle Adelinde. He pointed out her door to Sir Hastings, who presented himself to the damsel in search of a husband and after greeting her very civilly said to her very seriously,—

"Mademoiselle, I should like to see your mark."

"Milord, I have already said to all the persons who have addressed similar requests to me, that no one could see it till after they had married me."

"That is really your ultimate decision?"

"Yes, milord."

"You will show nothing without that?"

"Not the slightest thing, milord."

The Englishman reflected, looked hard at Mademoiselle Adelinde, scratched his forehead and went off like a shot out of a gun.

He had gone straight to a notary to have a marriage contract drawn up.

A week later Adelinde was Lady Hastings, and

"Mademoiselle, I should like to see your mark."

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY WILLIAM GLACKENS

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the Englishman said with the air of a conquering hero as he looked round on the young men whom he had heard discussing the mysterious mark,—

"I knew very well that I should be sharper than you. I have seen the mark—and it exceeded my expectations."

"Deuce take it, we could also have seen it at the same price," one of them would say to him, "but we were not willing to do so. Come, Sir Hastings, in good faith confess that it's a mere trifle, a nothing, just one of those little moles that we see every day."

The Englishman never would answer these questions.

THE GRISETTES' TRICK

IMAGINE, first of all, two young girls about twenty years old. The first, whom we will simply call Aline, was tall, slender, well-made, her hair and her eyes being very dark, accentuated the fairness of her skin; her mouth, which was maybe a trifle large, contained teeth of which a princess might have been jealous; her hand, white and beautifully moulded, had been admired by a sculptor; and her leg—well, in truth, I can't tell you anything at all about her leg, because I never saw it, and that is very vexatious, for I should

probably have had something nice to tell you about Mademoiselle Aline's limb. Here I see my readers pause to say to me,—

"Oh, Monsieur Author, this is a true story you are going to tell us, since you confess that you know this Mademoiselle Aline. This is not a tale made up to please, a little story originated solely for the recreation of your readers, and which no doubt later on will be reproduced on the stage in the form of a vaudeville."

No, reader, I am not telling you a fairy tale, we must leave that to the Arabians, to nurses, and to grandmothers; as for me, I am relating to you an incident that really happened, which was told to me by one of the parties to it. I have only changed the names and the positions of some of the personages, because it is always necessary for a writer to change something, if it only be to give the impression that he originated it. Now you know what you can rely on, we will go on.

Mademoiselle Aline was very pleasing. She was a modest embroideress, she had some mind and a sensitive heart, which are more often found together than one would believe, for stupid people are generally much less easily moved than those who have wit, for the very simple reason that the mind being the way to the heart, when one has no mind one has a heart without a way to it, so that it must be rather difficult to get to it.

I will return to Mademoiselle Aline. Twenty

years, pretty, well-made, an embroideress and sensitive, she should have made love her sweetest pastime and her principal occupation; she should have had at least one sweetheart; have left him when he was inconstant; have replaced him when he was jealous, and adored him when he was a heedless fellow. She ought to have thought of her lover when going for her little jar of cream and her half ounce of coffee, in putting her hair in curl papers, and in threading her needle; in fact she should have talked about him to her dearest friend and have dreamed of him every night.

Well, nothing of that sort took place. Aline never dreamed of her sweethearts, she never sighed after her lover, she did not think she saw his sweet image in a rose, in the bottom of a cup, in a busby or in the cat's tail. She did not speak of him to her friend, she did not wait at the window watching for him in the street, she did not go to the play with him or dance the galop and the cachuca with him as her partner, and all for a single reason which will suffice you I hope; and this reason was — Aline had no lover.

A grisette without a lover, you are going to say; why that's a phenomenon, a being set apart. It is a woman without a corset, a drawing-room without a piano, a salad without vinegar, asparagus without sauce, a coat without buttons, and a national guard without belts.

But why had Mademoiselle Aline, whom you

say was so sensitive and witty, never experienced love? A savant has said that there is no effect without a cause. Anybody could have said as much as this savant.

Yes, no doubt there was a cause for it.

When Aline was only twelve years old she lived with an old aunt, and the latter had taken her to a card-reader who was said to be able to see into the future.

The good woman wished to treat her young niece, and instead of taking her to the play she had her fortune told. The card-reader, to make an impression on the plastic mind of the young girl, took her into a little room the walls of which were covered with dark hangings, and in which no door could be seen when once one was inside.

Then the gypsy had put on a black gown, in the sleeves of which she could have hidden two babies and a four-pound loaf of bread.

She put on her head a great pointed cap, upon which were little scraps of scarlet cloth in the shape of devils, flames, serpents, and great caldrons.

Then she spread out on her table her big pack of cards; for you know that card-readers have several packs. They are like those wine merchants who sell wine at different prices, but the wine is always the same.

But the old aunt had wanted to do things generously; so she had paid for her niece to have the big pack.

You may judge whether Aline listened calmly to the words of the gypsy. The poor child, already greatly impressed by all that her aunt has told her of the wondrous talent of the soothsayer, trembled in every limb as she glanced timidly around her to try to discover a door by which she might leave. She felt her heart congeal with terror, and she remembered perfectly these words which the fortune-teller pronounced in a voice that might have competed with a cornet,—

"Little girl! destiny, through me, forbids you ever to listen to the language of love; for I see that in the future men will bring misfortune upon you!"

Poor Aline remembered these words, and as she grew up she had never forgotten them.

The old aunt dying, Aline had gone to live with one of her friends, the other young girl whom I made known at the commencement of this true story.

The latter was named Stephanie; she had a saucy little nose, very lively eyes and little dimples in her cheeks, she was fair and blooming, lively and cheerful.

She sang all day as she worked at her lace, for Mademoiselle Stephanie was a lacemaker.

Her heart was always occupied, and when a lover was unfaithful she was never at a loss to replace him.

And you may imagine how extraordinary and

even ridiculous the conduct of her friend seemed to her. She could not understand why Aline so obstinately refused the devotions of the young men. Sometimes she said to her,—

"Aline, you have no common sense. One doesn't really live without love, without an attachment for somebody; as often as not, one has more than one. What is your reason for hating the men?"

"I don't hate them, quite to the contrary," answered Mademoiselle Aline.

"Then you have not as yet met a single one who pleases you?"

"Oh, yes, I have met several who seemed quite nice to me."

"And why, then, would you never listen to them?"

"Because it is forbidden to me to know love."

"Who has forbidden you?"

"A gypsy, when I was quite young, when I was only a little over twelve. She read the cards for me and predicted that I should be very unfortunate if I ever listened to the voice of love."

"Oh, how foolish you are. Why, Aline, do you believe that?"

"Certainly, since she was a sorcerer."

"You don't know, then, that there is nothing so nice as love. If you were once to love, you would do nothing else."

"That's quite possible."

"You are twenty years old, you are pretty, and you are not in love. It's frightful! Listen to one of them at least, why don't you, if only to prove that the fortune-teller told you true?"

"Oh, no, I shall be unfortunate, and it would be my own fault."

Stephanie was vexed to see that her advice and counsel went for naught; but she had got it into her head that her friend should experience a sentimental feeling, and she was not the girl to hesitate at difficulties.

All day long Mademoiselle Stephanie, who had a very tuneful voice, sang as she worked,—

It is love, love, love
That makes the world go round.

And as she sang she looked to see if her words had made any impression on Aline. When the latter seemed absent-minded she would exclaim,—

When one knows how to love and please,
Needs one any other fortune?

If that had its effect she would immediately add,—

From the moment that one loves
One becomes so sweet and gentle.

And as nearly all operas and vaudevilles contain pieces to praise the delights and pleasures of love, the young lacemaker had a big repertory and could have sung for a long time on this subject.

Aline was very fond of reading aloud, and her

friend made her read "Nouvelle Héloise," "Petit Jehan de Saintré" and "Faublas."

Aline was mad for the theatre, Stephanie took her there to see "Antony," "Joconde," and the "Bouquetière des Champs-Élysées," for they were calculated to awaken love in the most frigidly constituted person.

Aline continued to treat with the same coldness a handsome fair young fellow who came to sigh under her casement, who wrote charming things on her door every day with chalk, and who sometimes put bunches of violets in her keyhole.

Stephanie was in despair; she was for a moment tempted to tear her hair — and she probably would have done so had she had any white hairs; but as they were all of a very pretty flaxen shade she tore none of them out.

She approached her friend again and said to her with an accent that came from the heart,—

"Aline, you cause me much trouble. Don't you feel in the depths of your heart, that you lack something? Are you not tired of living like this?"

Aline heaved a big sigh and answered,—

"Yes, really I am very much tired of it. But there's the fortune-teller's horoscope."

"You still place faith in her skill, then? and what if I were to prove to you that these women don't know what they are talking about?"

"That would be different! But you can't prove it to me!"

Stephanie struck her forehead and exclaimed,—

"On the contrary I can easily do so. What was your fortune-teller called?"

"Madame Rotomago."

"A fine name for a gypsy. Does she practise her trade still?"

"I don't know as to that."

"Can you remember her house distinctly?"

"I think so, and I think that for three francs she will tell your fortune; but the big pack costs one hundred sous, and I had the big pack which is still more infallible."

"Come we'll have the big pack and we will give a hundred sous. It is rather dear. I confess I would rather spend them on sponge cakes and meringues; but really to cure you of your folly I am willing to make any sacrifice. Put on your shawl and let us go."

Aline was soon ready and the young girls set out, provided with the hundred-sous piece, which would enable them to have their fortune told. They arrived at a street in the Cité.

"It is here," said Aline in a trembling voice.

"Oh, it's here, is it?" answered Stephanie, and she went forward into an obscure alley, narrow and dirty, where she bravely proceeded for a few steps; but she returned immediately and said to her companion,—

"Before breaking my neck in there, it seems to me it would not be a bad plan to make some

inquiries; for in eight years the fortune-teller has very likely moved. I have moved seven times in one year myself. Wait, I see a fruiterer's opposite, I'll go there and inquire."

Stephanie went to the fruiterer's and asked if Madame Rotomago, card-reader, still occupied the same lodging.

"No, of course not; she left this neighborhood more than three years ago. You must know Madame Rotomago's reputation has grown — grown to such an extent that she is now the first fortune-teller in Paris."

"Can it be possible?"

"Yes, my dear; she resides now in a fine house in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, here is a printed copy of her new address."

The two young women took the address and directed their steps towards the Faubourg Saint-Germain; but all along the road Aline was sad, and sighed as she said to her companion,—

"You see very well that this woman is a sorceress, that she always tells the truth and never makes a mistake, since she has made her fortune and people in good society go to consult her also."

"That proves nothing at all," said Stephanie, "we will still go to Madame Rotomago's."

They arrived at the card-reader's new dwelling. It was a fine hotel, at the gate of which a tall Swiss covered with gold lace was walking up and down.

The two grisettes went into the courtyard and

asked for Madame Rotomago. The Swiss deigned to point to a handsome vestibule and said to them,—

"Go in there, there are some people there already, but you will have to await your turn."

Before going further, Stephanie reflected that in changing her location the fortune-teller had perhaps also changed her prices, and as she had only a hundred sous in her pocket she deemed it prudent to assure herself as to that matter.

She returned to the Swiss' lodge and said to him,—

"Monsieur, can you tell us what it will cost to get our fortunes told by Madame Rotomago?"

"Yes, mesdemoiselles, I can tell you that very easily; it is twenty-five francs when the simple pack only is asked for, and fifty francs when the big pack is used."

"Fifty francs!" exclaimed the two young girls, looking at each other. "Good heavens, it is horribly dear."

"The price is as fixed as that of a penny tart; madame never bates a sou; on the other hand, one is free to pay more if one has a fancy to do so."

"Oh, one can pay more, that is fortunate! but one ought, then, to be able to pay less also?"

"No, mademoiselle."

"But when one hasn't fifty francs?"

"One takes the small pack which is only twenty-five francs."

"And when one hasn't twenty-five francs?"

"Then one doesn't present one's self at Madame Rotomago's, card-reader to all the princes of Europe and the new world."

The girls left the hotel completely dumfounded.

"Come along home," said Aline, "you see Madame Rotomago is a great sorceress, and that we can't get near her."

"I see — well, I see that all this is humbug!" exclaimed Stephanie; "we will go to that gypsy — I wish — and — oh, what an idea! why, that will be delightful. Yes, yes, Madame Rotomago will read the cards for us; she will read them with the big pack and it will not cost us fifty francs, no nor a hundred sous, even."

"What do you mean?"

"Let me be, I have a plan. Trust to me; come along! come along!"

The two grisettes got into an omnibus and returned home. Arrived there Stephanie began by entirely changing her dress; she put on a pretty gown, a little cap, an elegant apron; she was no longer a grisette, she was a fashionable lady's maid.

She made her friend assume a similar costume and said to her,—

"Remember, we are no longer grisettes, we are two lady's maids and our mistress is the marquise of — of; wait till I think of a high-sounding name, the Marquise de Villaflorosa, and we are going to take a cab."

"But I don't understand."

"Come along, just the same; you'll know all about it when we go to the sorcerer's."

Aline followed her friend. The two young girls got into a cab and had themselves driven to Madame Rotomago's hotel. On the road Aline said to her friend,—

"If the fortune-teller should recognize me, should remember having told my fortune when I was twelve years old —"

"Oh, you are quite changed since that time — but that will show us whether she is a sorceress or no."

The cab stopped in front of the hotel; the Swiss did not recognize them. They went straight to the vestibule and entered a large room where several persons seemed to be waiting for admission.

"Shall I give you a number, mesdemoiselles?" said a kind of servant, going towards the two grisettes.

"It is hardly worth while," answered Stephanie, "we have not time to wait; tell your mistress that we have a message for her from our mistress, the Marquise de Villaflorosa."

Stephanie's decided tone imposed upon the servant, who departed to give the message and soon returned towards the grisettes, to whom she signed to follow her. She opened a door and introduced them into a small room where Madame Rotomago was seated.

"What do you want of me, young girls?" demanded the sorceress with a grave air.

"Madame," answered Stephanie, "Madame the Marquise de Villaflorosa, our mistress, gives a fête this evening and she wishes to have a gypsy to amuse her company. Our mistress did not tell us which one she wanted to have, she left us free to choose the fortune-teller that suited us, to whom she will give five hundred francs for the evening."

Here Madame Rotomago smiled graciously on the young girls. Stephanie resumed,—

"We came to you, madame; but we will only take that fortune-teller to our mistress who will first of all consult the cards for both of us. Think, madame, if that will suit you or else we will go to some one else."

"Why, yes, indeed, children, that will suit me and very well, too," exclaimed Madame Rotomago; "I'll read the cards for you, and I'll tell your fortunes with a full pack. I promise you nothing shall be lacking."

The young girls were delighted; the gypsy made them go into her sanctum. This was a small room hung with draperies so that one could not discover a door when once one was inside, and it absolutely answered to Aline's description.

Madame Rotomago assumed her grand costume, gown, cap, spectacles, nothing was missing; and then she spread out her big pack and told the young girls' fortunes.

Aline felt frightened for a moment, she thought at first that Madame Rotomago would see by the cards that she had been deceived and would discover what they really were; but she soon reassured herself as she heard a host of things utterly foreign to her and which could only happen to the person whose position they had assumed.

Stephanie bit her lips so as not to laugh in the fortune-teller's face. Aline felt a desire to do the same, for her faith had already vanished. In fact, the great game was ended, the horoscope was drawn; their mistress, the marquise, was to marry them and dower them richly. The young girls thanked her and left after giving Madame Rotomago an address where she was to seek the Marquise de Villaflorosa.

Once in the streets the grisettes laughed like two little madwomen.

"Well now," said Stephanie to her friend, "do you still believe in the skill of that woman, who could not divine the trick we played on her — and shall you be afraid to know love now?"

"Oh, no, indeed!" answered Aline, "and I have but one regret and that is having been foolish enough to follow Madame Rotomago's advice up to the age of twenty."

"Why, Aline, when prognostications are made one must remember them when they promise good fortune, but in this case, on the contrary, it is much better to forget them."

THE HOBGOBLIN

GROS-THOMAS owned a farm at a distance of rather more than twenty leagues from Paris. It was a delightful place, where one could enjoy all the charms of a country life; a sweet retreat for those who tired of the noisy pleasures of the town desired to substitute for them those afforded by nature. Situated in the midst of a beautiful valley surrounded by fat pasture lands, the farm, large, fertile and well-cultivated, gave evidence that its proprietor was well-to-do. The gardens afforded an abundance of fruits and vegetables, the yards were alive with fowls, the lofts stored with reserves of hay and grain, against bad seasons, and a variety of game was not lacking in the neighborhood.

Everybody envied the farmer, Gros-Thomas, who was barely forty, unmarried, rich, and free from gout. The villagers began to smile at him as soon as they saw him afar off, and the men offered their hands to him; all the mammas were very polite indeed.

But for all that Gros-Thomas became sad and gloomy; for some time past he had not seemed happy; he drank little, smoked less, and, on the other hand, he scolded all about him, almost always without cause or reason.

But, first of all, I ought to tell you that there lived at the farm with Gros-Thomas, old Deborah,

a very credulous, very superstitious woman, but very much attached to the farmer, whom she looked upon as her own son because she had almost brought him up.

There was also at the farm one Bertrand, a big, very simple fellow who often did his work badly, though he did it zealously, who had neither wit nor judgment nor imagination, but who replaced those things with a pair of strong, willing arms, for he was a robust, vigorous fellow, and in the country such qualities are more highly valued than wit; it is very certain that to dig and turn over the soil, to plant it, to water and to weed, imagination will not suffice. Then there was Raymond, a nice, pleasant-mannered young peasant, full of mischief and intelligence, and whose face showed as much wit as that of his comrade denoted simplicity.

Finally there was, and this was the most interesting person at the farm, a girl of sixteen, who was pretty, fresh-looking and altogether charming and graceful. I need not tell you that her attractions were natural, for she had lived nowhere but in the country; and where could she have taken lessons in coquetry? You will tell me, perhaps, that it is a knowledge which women possess from birth, and which develops of itself when they arrive at the age to desire to please. If this is the case, it would be very wrong to call that a fault which on the contrary is a gift of nature.

This pretty girl was called Adolphine; she was

an orphan, and the farmer was at the same time her master and her guardian; he was perhaps something else as well, and what that was we shall learn as this story proceeds.

There were, besides, several domestics, laborers, stablemen, and women servants, etc.; but we need not make their intimate acquaintance, that would take us too far out of our way.

It was only for the past year that the pretty Adolphine had been living at the farm.

Before her arrival Gros-Thomas had passed his time in drinking, laughing, singing and hunting; his face, always cheerful and smiling, seemed to defy melancholy, and all the neighbors spoke of him as a good fellow, the veritable life and soul of the company. What, then, had happened to change the farmer's humor? You may imagine it without much trouble — the feeling that produces so many metamorphoses, which disdains rank, bridges distances; which sometimes softens the most haughty disposition, and renders the bravest, the most audacious, timid; which sometimes lends wit to the foolish, but more often still makes the wise do foolish things; which made Apollo a shepherd, Jupiter a bull, a swan, a shower of gold; which put Antony at the feet of Cleopatra, Samson at the knees of Delilah, Hercules at the feet of Omphale; a feeling which was never known, they say, to the Emperor Henri II, who made a vow of chastity with his wife, Cunegonde, and the latter, being ac-

cused later on of adultery, proved her innocence by handling a red-hot iron without burning herself.

I do not know why ladies whose virtue is suspected do not now employ the same means to confound their calumniators, inasmuch as in our days they have discovered an unguent which renders the skin incombustible.

It was this same Emperor Henri II who as he was dying said to his wife's parents,—

"You gave her to me a virgin, I restore her to you a virgin."

If all the husbands could say the same to their fathers- and mothers-in-law, I do not know what pleasure there would be in getting married. Certainly, that is not the way to fulfil the scriptural injunction: "Be fruitful and multiply."

Reassure yourselves, young married people, Henri II's are rare, which is fortunate for the multiplication of the human species.

But all this has taken us far from Gros-Thomas, which happened because we were on the subject of love, a subject that is inexhaustible, although it is treated of very often; love does not pass like fashion, it belongs to all times, all places, all countries; people make love in all languages, at all hours, at all seasons. Find me anything that has been made so much, which may be made so much, and which will be made so much. Search as you may you cannot find it. Most assuredly we were put into this world to make love, and those who

do not do so must have very strong reasons for their course.

Love, then, which penetrates everywhere, had entered the farmer's heart, which up to the present had scoffed at this feeling, probably because he did not chance to have in his garden that statue of the little god on which are inscribed these lines,—

> The darling wingèd boy whom mortals must obey,
> Has laid on all mankind this fiat of his will:
> "Love thou tomorrow, if thou dost not love today;
> And if today thou lovest, why love tomorrow still."

Gros-Thomas had felt quite otherwise since he had seen Adolphine; the graces, the attractions of the little girl had had more effect upon him than all the blandishments of the richer countrywomen and farmers' wives of the neighborhood, he had fallen in love with her and for a long time would not even confess it to himself, but this is a sort of confession that is obligatory in the end. Gros-Thomas said to himself several times,—

"I do wrong, I do very wrong, at forty years of age, to love a girl who is but sixteen; I am a fatuous fool! an idiot! I had much better remain a bachelor. Marriage is an excellent thing, but when one has once tasted an excellent thing it is wiser to refrain from trying it again, for fear of finding that it does not fulfil one's expectations."

After repeating this for several weeks, Gros-Thomas perceived that, instead of decreasing, his love grew and strengthened as time went on. He

neither ate, nor drank, nor slept. Then he adopted another line of reasoning, for we can always find reasons to give ourselves to prove that we are not wrong in yielding to our passions or satisfying our desires.

Thomas on this occasion said to himself,—

"After all, as this young girl suits me and as I really love her, I should be foolish and idiotic indeed if I did not marry her. I am well-to-do, I am free to do exactly as I please. What does it matter to me what my neighbors may say — or my neighbors' wives. I have read in La Fontaine a fable entitled, 'The Miller, his Son and the Ass,' and the moral of the fable was this, 'One cannot please everybody and his father too.' Well, then, I am going to try to please myself first of all."

Gros-Thomas reasoned as deeply as "Mathieu Laensberg" and Mademoiselle Lenormand.

The farmer having firmly resolved to marry Adolphine, thought that it was quite in order that he should pay court to her and perfectly natural to try to please her.

He would probably have done better had he begun to do so long ago and not spent so much time in deciding whether he should or should not marry; for while Gros-Thomas was communing with himself in order to decide whether he ought to play the part of a lover, some one else had fallen in love with the seductive Adolphine, and the lover, so far from hesitating, had immediately made

known to the pretty maid the sentiment with which she had inspired him. It is necessary to act thus with women; one can never regain lost time; a sweetheart's heart is very like a citadel, it must be taken by assault and no time must be allowed it to put itself on the defence. I ask the ladies to pardon me for daring to compare their hearts to a strong place; some of them no doubt will think my comparison false.

The other person who loved Adolphine was Raymond, the farm-hand, whose intelligence and agreeable disposition everybody cited.

He was twenty-four years old, had very gentle, expressive eyes, a very sympathetic voice, and a well-knit frame. And these things count for more in a girl's eyes than sacks of crowns. These damsels never give a thought to the savings bank.

There are some moments in life when money is nothing in our eyes; and one of these is when we are really in love. This moment quickly passes and, alas! it rarely returns. Adolphine had learned the language of Raymond's eyes, and hers had apprised the young man that his admiration was not displeasing to her, and as people love to be with those who please them, Adolphine and Raymond found themselves together at each moment of the day; the young bachelor worked beside the girl, or helped her in what she was doing. When one saw Adolphine one might be pretty sure that Raymond was not far off. It was at this time that

farmer Gros-Thomas would have liked to declare his love for Adolphine, and the continual presence of the young farm-hand was not long in awakening his jealousy; he watched, he surprised some loving glances and tender words; he saw quite enough to understand that the good girl would not pay much attention to him if Raymond were there.

But how could he send away an industrious, faithful, intelligent fellow with whom he had no cause for complaint? Gros-Thomas did not wish to let it be seen that he was jealous; his only recourse was to disgust Raymond with his service at the farm; he gave him, therefore, the roughest work and charged him with the most difficult duties. Raymond would do this work without grumbling, for one look from Adolphine would make him forget his trouble and fatigue.

Gros-Thomas, being unsuccessful in his attempts, next took it into his head to put poor Raymond on a severe regimen. The habits of the farm were suddenly changed; the hours for meals were always those when poor Raymond was absent, and when he came in he had to content himself with what his master had left for him; a scanty supply of eatables and cold water replaced beef and cabbage soup. Poor Raymond sighed, but he dared not complain; but the gentle Adolphine did not want her sweetheart to grow thin, and she began to think to herself by what means she could repair the farmer's injustice.

Presently a strange rumor was circulated at the farm to the effect that supernatural events were taking place, that hobgoblins, ghosts, held nightly meetings as soon as the clock in the neighboring village had sounded the hour of midnight. Country people are superstitious, and terror soon took hold of them; they did not know of what they were afraid, but they began to tremble as soon as it grew dusk.

Gros-Thomas called Deborah, Bertrand, Raymond, and Adolphine before him; he questioned his servants.

"What is the reason of this fear which has got such a hold on you?" said the farmer; "what new thing is going on in my house? of what are you frightened?"

"Of a hobgoblin," said old Deborah, "which haunts the farm every night."

"Have you seen him?"

"I have seen him," said Bertrand; "it's a big ghost, all in white; he's always prowling round the cellar."

"Why didn't you catch hold of him? arrest him?"

"Me catch hold of a ghost? why, the idea! he would have dragged me down to the bottomless pit with him."

"And you, Raymond?" said Gros-Thomas, turning towards the young farm-hand, "have you seen this hobgoblin?"

"Yes, master," answered Raymond quickly, "I have seen him several times, he is all red and black; I tried to follow him, but he turned round and made such horrible grimaces at me that he deprived me of the power to walk."

Gros-Thomas then addressed Adolphine, and asked her if she had also seen the hobgoblin.

"Yes, of course," said the young girl; "one night when I could not sleep, hearing a noise in the passage near my room, out of curiosity I got up to go and see what it was, and I was well punished for my daring, and vowed I would never do the like again."

"What did you see, then?" asked old Deborah pressing close up to Bertrand.

"Something frightful! a big spectre; he was so tall that his head went through the ceiling; he had great flaming eyes, a nose hooked like a sickle, a mouth in which there were at least a hundred teeth; then he had bear's paws, a monkey's arm, and a fox's tail."

The farmer did not think fit to push his interrogations further, for the terror of each one as he told the story made the snowball bigger. Pretending therefore to a belief in the hobgoblin, Gros-Thomas said he should go to bed as early as possible, and shut himself up in his room, giving his servants permission to do the same.

So the hobgoblin had full liberty to wander about the farmhouse; as soon as night fell, so far from

disputing his passage, they hastened to make way for him, leaving him free to go where he would from the cellar to the garret.

People in general have a great respect for ghosts and hobgoblins; instead of trying to oppose them people fly and leave them masters of the battle-field; it is astonishing that hobgoblins do not more greatly increase; but, look you, everything is strange in this world and even in the other; when there was a court of law established to prosecute sorcerers, magicians, and ghosts, when there was a Chambre Ardente charged with the duty of running them down, when they had to do penance with naked feet and a rope round their necks — in fact, when they were burned alive, there was any quantity of sorcerers; they were found everywhere — in country and town, among shepherds, great noblemen and people of fashion. Now that they are left in peace one sees no more of them.

Everything passes; it is all a matter of fashion and custom. Æneas went to consult the sybil of Cumæ; King Saul interrogated the Witch of Endor; under Louis XIV ladies of quality consulted the Voisin; it was not so very long ago that every one was running to Mademoiselle Lenormand; now people only go to theatres, balls, and concerts, nobody wants to amuse himself now by being frightened. Other times, other manners.

But we must return to the hobgoblin of the farm; it was principally in the vicinity of the

cellar that the ghost was pleased to wander. This cellar also served as a larder, and in it were deposited the provisions in course of consumption, the game, the vegetables, the fruits, and everything that was to be served on the master's table.

Gros-Thomas had noted the preference which the hobgoblin accorded his cellar and he thought that, for a personage of the other world, he conducted himself very like an ordinary thief.

Having left the hobgoblin in full confidence that he need not fear surprise during that night, Gros-Thomas, who had not gone to bed, left his room, first arming himself with his sabre and carrying a dark lantern.

The farmer was careful to make no sound as he walked. He first went to old Deborah and made her get up, saying to her,—

"Follow me!"

"Why, what are you going to do?" inquired the good woman, hurriedly wrapping her dressing-jacket around her.

"You shall see, Deborah, come make haste—we are going to surprise the hobgoblin."

"The hobgoblin!" exclaimed the old woman, "The hobgoblin, Jesus-Maria! Why, I am not at all anxious to surprise even the smallest demon, I am too feeble to struggle with him, he would very quickly vanquish me. Go without me, my dear master; I will pray for you, that is all I can do."

As his only answer Gros-Thomas took Deborah

by the arm and rather roughly made her get out of bed. The old woman exclaimed loudly because she only had on her chemise and short bedgown; but her master pushed her before him, telling her that the hobgoblin did not come to the farm after an old woman and that she would have had nothing to fear even if she had presented herself in the light and airy costume of a savage, and that on the contrary it might have been an excellent means of making the demon take his departure.

And Gros-Thomas, who for a country man had a surprisingly perfect acquaintance with his La Fontaine, had a great desire to quote the history of Papefiguère's devil for Deborah's edification. But he did not, for the old woman at last being ready to follow him, he went with her to Bertrand's room.

There the farmer found more difficulties to overcome.

"What do you want me to get up for?" said Bertrand.

"To come with me and surprise this confounded hobgoblin who's frightened everybody at the farm."

"Wait till daylight, master; I don't feel like surprising anything at night."

"Come, Bertrand, get a weapon and follow us."

"A weapon? Do you want me to fight too?"

"It's a precautionary measure; I have an idea that our hobgoblin is made of flesh and bones like common mortals."

"Let him be what he will, I don't want to fight at night — there's another day coming. In broad daylight, when the sun is shining, one can at least see what one is aiming at."

"Bertrand, get up; if you don't I shall flog you," said the farmer.

Saying these words Gros-Thomas took his servant by the ear. Then Bertrand decided to get up, and went to look for a big knife, a pruning knife, a hammer, a spit, and an old gun, which he would have found it hard to discharge, seeing that for a long time past it had had no hammer, even had he had anything to load it with.

The farmer awakened several more of the servants; he ordered them all to follow him, walking cautiously so as to make no noise, for Gros-Thomas was extremely desirous of surprising the redoubtable hobgoblin.

The procession set out. The farmer led his timorous troops towards the cellar, the aforesaid troops trembling so that their teeth chattered like castanets, and sometimes they could with difficulty be persuaded to go any further.

Suddenly Bertrand uttered a sort of howl and everybody stopped.

"What's the matter with him?" demanded the farmer.

"I don't know what it is," said Bertrand, "but all of a sudden I certainly felt something pass between my legs."

"And me too!"

"And me too," said all the servants.

"You are all cowards," said Gros-Thomas, "every one of you; don't imagine that the hob-goblin we are going to surprise could pass between your legs."

"Why not?"

"Demons, spirits, can make themselves as small as they wish."

"There are some of them who can even enter the body."

"You needn't be afraid, idiot! that any of them will enter yours."

At this moment a great black cat crossed the passage again, passing through the procession.

"Why, that's Mimi," said Bertrand.

"And that was what frightened you, fools that you are. Come, let's get on and don't breathe a word."

They started off together. As they approached the cellar they saw a faint light and heard a noise which bore a distinct resemblance to the sound of kisses given and received.

All the servants began to laugh.

Gros-Thomas turned as red as a cherry, but he commanded them to remain silent. He wanted to surprise his people.

They were beside the cellar when Bertrand sneezed. Instantly the light they had seen from afar was completely extinguished.

The farmer, furious at his servant's awkwardness, strode ahead and, holding the lantern above his head, he entered the cellar. There he saw a table which held the remains of a copious repast; and at length he saw something white which kept close in a corner near a door.

He walked bravely towards the something; it was a young girl, it was that nice little Adolphine.

The little peasant was alarmed, she did not know what to say when her master asked her what she was doing there; and Gros-Thomas had some trouble in making her come forth from her hiding place. He succeeded in doing so, however, and then he groped his way into a small cellar which the pretty maid-servant seemed to want to prevent him from entering; then he shouted,—

"I've got my hobgoblin!"

At these words all the servants trembled violently and were on the point of making off, but their terror ceased when they saw their master lug the ghost forth by the ear. When a hobgoblin allows himself to be treated thus he has ceased to be dangerous.

But this was not a hobgoblin, or he would not have allowed them to arrest him.

Can you understand sorcerers and magicians who allow themselves to be quietly led to be butchered and burned on the Place de Grève? It is hardly worth while to be in league with the devil, if one has to submit to be treated like a criminal.

Our peasants, who had none of the learning of the judges presiding over the Chambre Ardente, understood this immediately. In administering justice the only thing necessary is common sense.

Gros-Thomas had torn off the sheet and the cap which hid the ghost's features and they recognized Raymond, who fell at the farmer's knees, while Adolphine fell on hers beside him.

"It's Raymond!" cried all the farm people.

"And hang it!" said Gros-Thomas, "for a long time past I have suspected it and I allowed him to feel safe for some days in order that later on I might more easily surprise him. Ah, Mademoiselle Adolphine, you come and sup with the hobgoblin, do you?"

"Mercy on us, master," said the young girl, "I have given him something to eat at night since you put him on an allowance by day."

Gros-Thomas understood the lesson; he thought it would be wrong of him to get vexed; besides he remembered a certain noise which he had heard by which he presumed that the two lovers had not met merely to sup.

He gave Adolphine in marriage to Raymond, which was much better for him than to form a foolish union which would not have rendered him happy.

And in ceasing to play the part of a lover he soon regained his appetite, his cheerfulness, his health, his good temper.

By all this I do not intend to convey the impression that love is a passion which causes nothing but harm; no, love is really an excellent thing — when it is reciprocated.

A DAY WITH AN AUTHOR

THERE are many people who imagine that the path of an author is strewn with roses, laurels, and pleasures, but before acquiring the reputation to which those aspire who have a real vocation, it is nothing but drawbacks, weariness, trouble, work and lost pains; nothing but injustice to bear, petty intrigues to frustrate, and critics to disdain. Then when he has reached an honorable position, when success has recompensed his toil, when the applause of the public indemnifies him for the gross condemnation of envious people, do not fancy that his days will roll by in sweet quietude, and that, quite at his ease in the seclusion of his study, he may give himself up to thought, to that work which furnishes the charm of his existence. Not at all; he will not be left in peace to follow the career upon which he has entered. If a thousand disappointments await those who are beginning to make their reputations, numberless vexatious, tiresome, importunate, intriguing, foolish and simple people attach themselves to those whose success is well-

established. The man who has a little renown hears them continually buzzing around him as wasps buzz around the flowers whose sweetness they covet.

To an author who has had any success, people who are entirely unknown to him come every day to propose themselves as collaborators. These people sometimes are guilty of dreadful mispronunciations in explaining their object or they write their articles with M. Marle's orthography. They depart in a very bad temper because he refuses to work with them, and go and say everywhere that he has stolen their ideas.

Then come the album nuisances. A man who has some reputation is always sure on going home to find that some albums have been left for him with his porter.

The album is the bête noire of the author and of all artists of renown. The album pursues him incessantly in town and country, into his studio or his library; people whom he has never seen, whom he does not even know by name, are not afraid to send him their albums with a note on amber-scented paper, in which they exalt him above the greatest men of the past, and even of the future, in order to obtain from him a few lines of writing or a drawing or a verse or a water-color.

If he doesn't satisfy quickly enough the impatience of these people they will write to him every day begging him to be sure and remember their

albums, which they ask him to send back, for they cannot even take the trouble to come and get them.

At last, in order to put an end to the diurnal missives, he yields to their importunity ; he writes something in the album, then sends it back by a messenger.

They send him a thousand thanks on receiving the album, but do not pay the messenger ; and that is what our author gets for his loss of time and his politeness to some one with whom he is totally unacquainted.

I know a very witty author who adopted the wise course of writing the same thing in all the albums sent to him.

Let us penetrate for a moment into the sanctum of one of our renowned authors. We will go preferentially into that of a married man of letters ; for if marriage is a charming bond, the annoyances of a domestic life do not always accord with the court he should pay to the muses, and the voice of a howling child, or of a wife calling, very quickly causes the favorite of Apollo to descend from the celestial regions and recalls him to that inhabited only by simple mortals.

Monsieur G—— is a man of ability ; he has a pretty wife and two children whom he dearly loves. Let us follow him to his study, which he enters at eleven o'clock in the morning.

Monsieur G. (seating himself at his desk).—

Now to work! I feel in the mood for it today. (He looks at a clock.) Eleven o'clock already; we breakfasted too late. I've told my wife twenty times that I wanted to be in my study by ten o'clock; but women can never understand that when one has one's head full of a subject, when one's imagination is on the wing, the meal time must be made earlier or later to accord with his convenience. When mine has said, "My dear, the dinner is ready"; or, "The breakfast is waiting," it is absolutely necessary for me to go at once or my study is besieged, and then there is ill-humor and grumblings — and I, who love peace, find it easier to yield than to contest the matter. (He takes up a manuscript which he perceives on his desk.) What have we here? I don't know this writing; it must be some manuscript that some one brought me and that my wife received during my absence. I have said that I would not receive any. It is surprising how little attention they pay to what I say here. (Turning over the leaves of the manuscript.) What writing! These authors should at least learn to write legibly. What kind of a work is this? (He reads the title), "The Grand Turk in Love, or, Poison, Dagger and Bowstring." That's very pretty, very promising. "A drama in five acts with two prologues." That must be very curious. (He puts the manuscript back in a corner of his desk.) How pleasant it will be to spend two or three hours in deciphering that. If I were to peruse all the

manuscripts sent me, I should, instead of working for myself, spend all my time in looking over the works of others. I shall seriously scold my wife for having taken in this manuscript. Let's look at the little poem on "Domestic Happiness." Well! where is my manuscript? There! They've been at my desk and upset my papers, the same thing every day. It is insupportable. (He calls.) Constance! Constance!

MADAME G. (coming in her dressing-jacket and carrying a pretty little cap in her hand).—What do you want, my dear?

MONSIEUR G.—You have disturbed the papers in my desk!

MADAME G.—Me! What an idea! what should I disturb your papers for? what do you suppose I wanted at your desk?

MONSIEUR G.—Then it was the maid. She has disturbed my pens, my penknives. Some day she'll take an important paper—a chapter, a scene, to singe a fowl or to use for curl-papers. (Shouting.) Once for all, madame, I positively will have nothing touched on my desk!

MADAME G.—Good gracious me! nobody shall touch anything; but it is hardly worth while to shout like that. But how do you like this cap?

MONSIEUR G. (fumbling in his boxes).—Where the devil is my poem? I left it there yesterday.

MADAME G. (putting the cap on).—Do you think it becoming?

MONSIEUR G.— They have taken all my sealing wafers. There's not one left.

MADAME G.— Oh, as for your sealing wafers, it is your daughter who takes them to play with. You must scold her well. The color of the ribbon is pretty, is it not?

MONSIEUR G.— If it was my daughter — then it is different — so long as she doesn't eat them, for they would make her ill. Ah, here is my poem — that's lucky!

MADAME G.— You see your poem wasn't lost, after all. It really did not require all that shouting. The color of the ribbon is pretty, is it not?

MONSIEUR G. (without looking at his wife).— Yes, yes, it is pretty, charming, delightful — you look very well in it. But leave me to work; go my dear, go, I beg of you.

MADAME G.—Gracious! he hasn't even looked at me. By the way, some one has sent us a very fine salmon.

MONSIEUR G. (impatiently).— Well, that's good. What does it matter to me that they've sent a salmon? Let me get to work, I tell you.

MADAME G.— How gallant are these authors! and there are some women who say to me, "Oh, you must be happy to be the wife of a clever man." Oh, did you see the manuscript that was brought yesterday? I put it there!

MONSIEUR G.— You did very wrong to take it in. Once for all, I don't wish to read any more

of the manuscripts of these people who wake up some fine morning and think they will write a drama or a novel. They come to one for advice, counsel; and when one tells them frankly what one thinks of their work, they get angry. Who brought it?

MADAME G.—A young man, very fair, such a nice, polite fellow, and he begged me so hard to take his manuscript.

MONSIEUR G.— That's just like all the women. Because he was a fair, handsome young fellow you couldn't refuse him.

MADAME G.—Really, monsieur, I should advise you not to say too much about that, for when women come here under the pretext of showing you manuscripts you know very well that if they are young and pretty you ask them into your study and carefully close the door.

MONSIEUR G.— Because a lady is often timid and doesn't like to speak before witnesses. But enough of this! Constance, will you do me a great favor?

MADAME G.— Certainly, my dear. What is it?

MONSIEUR G.— Take yourself off.

MADAME G.—I was sure that was what you were going to say. Who would be an author's wife! He hasn't even looked at my cap!

(Madame G—— leaves her husband's study. He takes his poem, rereads it, appears to be meditating, then takes up his pen, saying),—

" It seems to me this passage goes very well:

One's children prove the charm of married life,
A happy household, void of troublous strife;
A charming wife, whose minist'ring care doth tell,
Each day, each hour, she loves her husband well.

That's very good — it's flowing — let us finish the chapter. I am drawing the portrait of the wife. (He rubs his forehead.) Ah, good, here I am. (He declaims.) 'A woman is a deity'—Yes, that isn't bad at all. 'A woman is a deity' (Somebody softly scratches the study door.) 'Is a deity—a—a' (Some one scratches louder.) But who the devil's that at the door? I can't be quiet for a moment here! (The noise stops.) It seems to me to be done on purpose; just as soon as I come in here to work, it is who can make the most noise and bother me most. Let's see, I had my verse—ah, this is it! 'A woman is a deity who watches'" — (Some one scratches much louder, and kicks the door several times.)

Monsieur G. (angrily).—Who's there? What do you want? Will you stop that noise? (He goes to the study door and opens it. A little girl of six is pressed tightly against it, she holds a cup and ball in her hand.)

The Little Girl.—It is me, papa; I was knocking very softly because mamma had forbidden me to disturb you, and I'm not big enough to open the door.

Monsieur G. (in a big voice which gradually

softens).—What, mademoiselle, is it you? How dare you come to disturb me? It is insupportable, that is (drawing her on his knee). What is it you want? Let us see — why, have you been crying? I can't have anyone make you cry.

THE LITTLE GIRL (very quickly and without taking breath).— Papa, it was brother, he's always doing something horrid to me, he slaps me, and he broke my cup and ball, my pretty little cup and ball, because I wouldn't let him take it.

MONSIEUR G.— Oh, Leon does such naughty things, does he! Very well, I shall have something to say to him.

THE LITTLE GIRL. — Yes, I told him I would tell you; he said he didn't care, and he put out his tongue at me.

MONSIEUR G.— The little rascal! Very well, I'll talk to him. Come, run along, sweetheart.

THE LITTLE GIRL.— Mend my cup and ball.

MONSIEUR G.— Oh, I haven't time — what the devil! (Taking the cup and ball.) It is only the string that is broken (he puts a new string in the cup and ball). Wait, I'll make it shorter, so it will be handier to play with. And be sure not to go too fast, you might hurt yourself with the ball. Look, here is the way to do it. (He gives a lesson in cup and ball.)

THE LITTLE GIRL.— Oh, I know how to do it, too. Thank you, dear papa. (She takes the cup and ball.)

MONSIEUR G. (after kissing his daughter).— I must get at it once more and I hope I shan't be disturbed again (he shuts the study door) or I shall be seriously angry. He places himself at his desk and begins to scratch his forehead again.) Let's see — where was I?

> . . . whose minist'ring care doth tell
> Each day, each hour, she loves her husband well.

That's good! very good! I keep to my metre. Ah!

> Who watches tenderly o'er —

(Some one opens the door violently, a little boy of eight runs into the study, jumping and laughing.)

THE LITTLE BOY.— I can open the door, I can! I am big now. I'm taller than my sister, she only comes up to my nose.

MONSIEUR G. (very angrily).— Well, monsieur, how dare you come into my study like this? You are a bold little rascal and I've told you never to disturb me. Go away, and if I hear of your taking your sister's cup and ball and putting out your tongue at her, I shall punish you. Come, run off quickly, you bad boy. Go away with your boisterousness.

(The little boy, whose face lengthens while his father is speaking, hangs his head and is going sadly out, without daring to breathe a word. His father calls him back.)

MONSIEUR G.— Tell me what you came here for. You came for something, no doubt.

THE LITTLE BOY (with a full heart).—Yes, but you are angry with me. I'm going — I didn't mean to make you angry.

MONSIEUR G.— Come here, come along. (He takes him by the hand.) Why did you take your sister's cup and ball? You made her cry. You are the biggest and you ought to be more sensible.

THE LITTLE BOY (trying to cry).— My sister didn't tell you that she had taken my little theatre and spoiled the scenery. The beautiful forest is full of comfits. I wanted to make plays like you. Boo-hoo-hoo! And I can't now — and my poor marionettes haven't any legs.

MONSIEUR G. (kissing his son) — Poor boy! your forest is full of comfits. Don't cry and I will buy you another. Wait, here is a nice piece of apple sugar.

THE LITTLE BOY.— Thank you, papa. Draw me a punch with a pen, then I'll cut it out.

MONSIEUR G.— I haven't time now — some other day.

THE LITTLE BOY.— Oh, papa, a little punch, just a little one.

MONSIEUR G. (taking a pen and sheet of paper). — You are as persevering as your mother. Come, here's your punch; now run off at once, and don't come again or I shall pull your ears.

THE LITTLE BOY (taking paper).— Oh, thank you, dear papa. (He goes out skipping, and shuts the door after him.)

MONSIEUR G.— Poor little fellow! he wants to make plays like me. He's a nice boy, is that. (Resuming his pen.) We must hope that they'll leave me in peace now.

A woman is an angel who watches with tenderness.

Why no, that won't do, the rhyme is false. A woman is not an angel — I had put something else. But when one is disturbed at every moment as I am. A woman is a star — no — A woman is a love. No! The word won't come.

MADAME G. (half opening the door).— My dear — my dear.

MONSIEUR G. (striking his fist on his desk).— Come now, this is altogether too much! to disturb me again!

MADAME G.— Good gracious, my dear, I am very sorry, but the young man who was here yesterday has come for his manuscript.

MONSIEUR G.— Tell him to go to the devil! he and his "Grand Turk in Love." I was sure that this cursed manuscript would cause me no end of trouble. Why can't he keep his work to himself?

MADAME G.— Indeed, you can say what you have to say to the young man himself. Come in, monsieur, here is my husband.

(Madame G—— departs, having shown in a very modestly dressed young man, who bows confusedly and remains near the door, not daring

to advance, twirling his hat in his hands and looking as though he did not want to speak.)

MONSIEUR G. (to himself).— I must remember that I was at the foot of the ladder myself once. This young man is timid, which is extremely rare to-day. (He invites the young man to be seated. The latter places himself on the edge of a chair and stammers.)

THE YOUNG MAN.— Monsieur, I am the author of the piece which has been placed in your hands. I should be very highly honored to begin with you. I have five more dramas in course of writing and I will bring them all to you.

MONSIEUR G.— No, monsieur, do not take the trouble, I beg of you; here is your manuscript, I cannot accept any collaboration.

THE YOUNG MAN.— But, monsieur, if this piece does not please you I have others.

MONSIEUR G.— As I had the honor of telling you, such an arrangement is impossible.

THE YOUNG MAN.— At least, monsieur, tell me what you think of my piece.

MONSIEUR G.— The title alone dismayed me.

THE YOUNG MAN.— However, "Poison, the Dagger, and the Bowstring" are promising.

MONSIEUR G.— Exactly, they promise horrors, and I am not a horror-monger.

THE YOUNG MAN.— But, monsieur, is it not necessary to awaken the strongest emotions by means of the drama.

MONSIEUR G.— One can produce them with true sentiments and touching effects. People go the second time to see a play that makes them cry, but they rarely go back to see one that makes them shudder, for one never shudders twice at the same piece and one will cry a hundred times at a play like "Misanthropie et Repentie," of which the subject was eminently popular. Here is your manuscript.

THE YOUNG MAN.— Then, monsieur, you will not work with me; and what do you advise me to do with my "Grand Turk?"

MONSIEUR G.— Anything you like. Since the piece is ready, you won't lose anything by offering it elsewhere. Pardon me if I don't invite you to stay longer, as I have some work to finish.

THE YOUNG MAN (bowing).— Monsieur, I am very sorry to have disturbed you. (He turns back.) Monsieur, I also write vaudevilles. And can turn a couplet easily enough.

MONSIEUR G.— I don't doubt it, monsieur, turn your couplets; I want to finish my poem.

THE YOUNG MAN.— I wrote some couplets for an uncle's birthday, named Grégoire. The name just fitted, the couplets were thought funny; if you like I will sing them for you. They are set to the tune of the "Petit Matelot."

MONSIEUR G.— Monsieur, once more I repeat to you that I have to work, and that I cannot listen to you further.

THE YOUNG MAN.— Then, monsieur, I beg your pardon. I will leave you. Your servant, monsieur. (He bows and leaves the study.)

MONSIEUR G.— Ah, that's a good riddance.

THE YOUNG MAN (half opening the door of the study).— Monsieur, I am nevertheless delighted to have had the honor of making your acquaintance.

MONSIEUR G. (reshutting the door). — And I the same, monsieur, I assure you. This young fellow is a terrible nuisance. This is what one is exposed to in taking in those tiresome manuscripts. I ought to have them sent away from the door, as so many others do. But I am afraid then of sometimes missing a friend's visit. If only my wife and the maid had some discrimination. Let's see, I must get to work again on my "Domestic Happiness" — that's a pretty title. I'm pleased with my title. Oh, where was I? At the wife's portrait (he passes his hand over his forehead). This unfortunate young man has upset all my ideas. This was it, I think,—

A woman is — a deity

that's it. Ah, I remember now! An angel would not go. "A woman is a deity who watches" "who"— that confounded fellow, with his "Grand Turk"! — "Who watches tenderly o'er the cherished objects" (some one rings). "The objects" (some one rings again) "o'er the —o'er the" (some one rings louder). Devil take that bell! My wife's

gone out with the children, I suppose, and the maid's gone on an errand. But they may ring, I shan't open the door. (He declaims) —

> . . . whose minist'ring care doth tell
> Each day, each hour, she loves her husband well
> A woman is a deity —

(Some one rings fit to break the bell.) They'll break it. There's no way of getting out of it. (He leaves his study to go and open the door.)

A tall, dry, yellow gentlemen, dressed in black, with green spectacles, a dirty shirt frill and dirty hands enters immediately, exclaiming,—

"I knew very well that there was somebody in. The porter said to me, 'There's some one in'; that was why I persisted, and it was well that I did so."

MONSIEUR G.— But, monsieur, it seems to me that that was no reason for breaking my bell.

THE TALL GENTLEMAN (pushing Monsieur G—— into the room and treading close on his heels).—Is it Monsieur G——, the author, whom I have the honor of addressing?

MONSIEUR G. (trying to prevent the gentleman from going in).— Yes, monsieur; and may I know your name?

THE TALL GENTLEMAN (still pushing his way in). — Faith, I'm pleased enough to have found you in, for I have come often before and they have always told me you were out; which is vexatious

when one lives at a distance and it rains. I detest umbrellas, and I never carry one.

MONSIEUR G. — Will you tell me, monsieur, how I can serve you?

THE TALL GENTLEMAN (who has just entered the drawing-room).— That is my object. I ask a moment's audience of you — for what I have to propose to you necessitates an explanation.

MONSIEUR G. (aside, after looking at the gentleman).— He hasn't a manuscript. I can risk it. (He conducts him to the study and offers him a seat. The tall gentleman spreads himself out in his chair and takes out his snuffbox.)

THE TALL GENTLEMAN.— I will go straight to my end. Do you take snuff? (offering his snuffbox) — it is quite fresh.

MONSIEUR G. — I never take it.

THE TALL GENTLEMAN.—An author and don't take snuff? you astonish me!

> Said Aristotle and his learned clan
> Snuff is divine, the best good made for man.

I have taken it since I was fifteen years old; I got accustomed to using it for a disease of the eyes which it was difficult to cure. Monsieur, I have much to say to you (Monsieur G—— smiles broadly). You must know, in the first place, that I have travelled, travelled a good deal. By a series of adventures which it would take me too long to relate to you, I found myself one morning in

winter right in the midst of the Apennines. It was not warm there, I can assure you!

MONSIEUR G. — Monsieur, are you trying to tell me your history? If so —

THE TALL GENTLEMAN (still speaking).— Another time, right at the height of the dog days, I found myself in Spain. In the Sierra mountains a burning sun shone full in my face. That yellowed my complexion considerably, as you may perceive.

MONSIEUR G. — I don't care whether you are yellow or not, monsieur; but I should like to know how all this can interest me!

THE TALL GENTLEMAN.—Another time I travelled on foot all the way from Milan to Naples, a great distance. My boots were in holes, from circumstances which would take too long in the telling (offering his snuffbox). Do you take snuff?

MONSIEUR G. — I have already told you that I do not. But I do not understand how —

THE TALL GENTLEMAN — Another time I was upset with a diligence on the way to Lyons; I fell into a very deep gully, my body was one mass of bruises, but, strange to say, an apple which I had in the left pocket of my coat was not even squashed — I say squashed because that word best expresses my idea.

MONSIEUR G. — In fact, monsieur, I must beg of you — my moments are precious —

THE TALL GENTLEMAN.—You don't take snuff

(he takes a pinch). I have reached my object, monsieur. By the little I have told you, you may imagine that I have had some adventures — a man who travels incessantly for thirty years must needs have a good many. Well, monsieur, I came here to make your fortune — and my own at the same time — but I am not ambitious. You write novels, I have learned that in my travels — well, I'll sell you my adventures, which will furnish you material for several large volumes — one a week; your gains will be large and we will share them. I shan't put my name, I'll leave you all the glory.

Monsieur G. (rising).— If I had guessed the object of your visit, monsieur, it would have been shorter; I do not buy adventures.

The Tall Gentleman.— What! they won't suit you! That surprises me. Just consider that strange adventures will make your works lively, out of the common, thrillingly emotional. Then that is your last word — it is vexatious. You have lost some really fine topics — you won't use them then? (He takes the papers up.) I should have given you all those for a mere song. But as they don't suit you — can you oblige me by lending me a hundred sous. I have forgotten my purse. I will return them to you when I am passing your way.

Monsieur G——, delighted to get rid of this gentleman, hastily puts a hundred sous into his hand; the tall gentleman then bows and leaves in

great haste. Monsieur G—— shuts his door again angrily, and goes and sits down again in front of his desk, exclaiming,—

"What an insupportable chatterer (he takes up his pen, muttering), 'A woman is a deity.' I have a headache; the result of the annoyance I've experienced. 'A woman is an angel, a treasure.' I don't know what I was going to say—let me reflect for a moment, then it may come back to me." (He rests his head in his hand.)

Madame G——half opens the door of the study very softly, and puts in her head saying, "My dear, I only want to say two words to you."

Monsieur G. (without answering).—"A woman is a deity—"

Madame G.—Why don't you answer me?

Monsieur G. (turning round angrily).—Well, come now, what is it—let's have an end to this. What is the matter with you, by Jove! What has happened? Is the house on fire?

Madame G.—Would you like it served with sauce or with oil?

Monsieur G. (fiercely thumps his desk with his fist, making his papers jump, then falls back despairingly into his chair exclaiming),—It's frightful, madame—it is unpardonable to disturb me like this about a fish—when I was thinking, when I was deeply engrossed in my subject. You ought to have been a grocer's wife, a Beotian's wife. You don't understand an author!

MADAME G. (as she goes out).— We'll have it served with oil then.

Monsieur G—— remains alone and is for some time so overwhelmed that he remains motionless in front of his desk. Finally, as he grows calmer and his ideas begin to quicken again, and he takes up his pen, his children knock at the door and shout,—

"Dinner, papa — papa — dinner. Everybody is waiting for you!"

Monsieur G—— throws his pen aside, saying, "This is an author's typical day!"

THE PARISIANS ON THE RAILWAY

ON a Sunday, and in such beautiful weather, to risk one's self on the railway! Oh, monsieur, it is very imprudent, very daring. There will be too many people; they'll crowd, and fight for places; my gown and cape will be torn to ribbons; believe me, you had better put off going."

Thus spoke a lady of some fifty summers, who had been very pretty and very coquettish and who had retained her coquetry although she had lost her beauty. This was Madame Grenat, the wife of a big jeweller of Paris. During a long period Madame Grenat had shone at her counter. Fine

eyes, beautiful teeth, a pretty hand, invest the objects one wishes to purchase with increased charm. One must have a very solidly established trade to venture to put an ugly woman behind his counter. M. Grenat had not repented having done the contrary. Men of the best kind had brought his shop into vogue and he had done a good business. For a ring, a bracelet, a button, one paid a very high price at his place, but the pretty jeweller had the ability to give a smile with each article that probably was without price, for no one bargained with her. In short, M. Grenat had acquired a fortune large enough for all his needs, and he had two children who looked very like his wife.

The jeweller's family was composed of a daughter aged seventeen and a little boy ten years old. The young lady was tall, thin, fair, and timid. One would suppose that she might have fine eyes, but one could not be certain of it, because she never raised them. They had left Adolphine at a boarding school until she was sixteen. During the year she had been with her parents she had often regretted her school companions and their recreations.

As to young Benjamin Grenat, he was what is commonly called a little devil, a determined little rascal, one of those small boys whose parents think them lads of spirit because they constantly make enough noise to deafen everybody, break everything, touch everything, mix themselves up in everything, and are always hungry.

I have not told you that the jeweller was a big man of fifty-five with a jolly face, who wore a beautiful blond wig curled above his left eye; that he was possessed with a mania to talk incessantly of his business, to try to be witty, and to believe that he was master in his own house, although little Benjamin was really the only master of the house and had been since he attained his fifth year.

"If you don't want to go to Saint-Germain on the railroad," answered M. Grenat stroking his chin, "I don't at all care, I'm not greatly set on going. I was only thinking of doing so to give you pleasure. And I shall go to a friend's this morning who has asked me to look at and give my opinion on some rubies which he says are very fine. I shall be able to judge of them."

"Yes, I would much rather go to the Tuileries," said Madame Grenat, going to glance in her mirror, which formerly had reflected many pretty things.

Mademoiselle Adolphine sighed when she heard they were not going on the railway. Was it simply regret for a lost pleasure excursion? or was there some other secret cause for that sigh? Whichever it may have been, the young girl turned towards her mother and, without raising her eyes, asked,—

"Must I change my dress again to go to the Tuileries?"

"You will do very well as you are," answered Madame Grenat. "At your age one should not be incessantly thinking about dress."

The drawing-room door was noisily opened just then. A little boy, his face smeared with chocolate and sweetmeats, darted into the middle of the room, shouting,—

"Well, aren't we going to start? aren't you ready? What a long time it takes you!"

This was M. Benjamin, who had been having a third breakfast and presented himself in this state to his parents.

"Why, yes, my dear," said mamma, readjusting her bonnet, "we are going to the Tuileries."

"What do you mean? The Tuileries, why, that isn't where we were going; it was on the railway. Papa told me yesterday that today we should go on the railway. I want to go there! I'm tired of your old Tuileries, it's always the same thing. Besides, you told me that you would take me on the railway. Were you telling me a story, papa? that would be naughty."

"No, I only say what I mean. In fact, I don't see why we should not go on the railway today; it seems to me I am master here."

"Then," said Madame Grenat, putting on her cape, "since Benjamin wishes it so much, let us go on the railway."

"Let some one call a carriage," said M. Grenat to his servant. "Are you ready, madame?"

"Yes, my dear; good heavens! here's Benjamin's trousers torn at the knee. How did you do that, you scamp?"

"Mercy, I don't know, it came of itself."

"If it came of itself, my dear, he is not to blame," muttered the jeweller.

"But he can't go out like that."

"Why not," answered papa, "with his jacket on, it will never be seen."

"I want to put on another pair!" said the little boy, "I want to put on a pair of white ones."

"But you will be cold, my dear, the weather isn't warm enough for those yet."

"So much the better, it's fun to be cold."

"He's full of spirits," said the jeweller aside to his wife.

The cab had arrived and M. Benjamin had put on his white trousers. The whole family went downstairs, Mademoiselle Adolphine dared not glance into her looking-glass; her mother had so often said that a young girl should not be vain that the poor child did not know that she was pretty.

At the moment of getting into the carriage M. Benjamin, in trying to jump on the step, managed to slip and soil his trousers against a wheel.

"What a tiresome child!" exclaimed Madame Grenat, "see what he has done now."

"It wasn't my fault that I slipped; did I do it on purpose?" answered M. Benjamin with an impertinent air.

"No," said the jeweller; "we can't suppose that he did it on purpose. But it is nothing, he can cover it with his hat so it won't be seen."

"Oh, won't it," said Benjamin, "everybody will be making fun of me; I'm going to put on my blue trousers."

"Monsieur, you will pay me by the hour," said the coachman, "while the little boy goes up to change his trousers for the second time. I have been standing at the door now, for half an hour."

"That's all right! that will rest your horses."

Finally M. Benjamin got his blue trousers on, and this time he got into the cab without accident; but just as they were about to close the carriage door he began to shout,—

"Brusquet! where's Brusquet! we have forgotten Brusquet."

M. Grenat looked at his wife, as if to ask her whether he must go in search of Brusquet, an enormous mastiff that their son had picked up and developed a great affection for within the past few days. Madame Grenat was undecided; but the cabby, tired of waiting so long, had closed the door, remounted to his seat and whipped his horses without paying any attention to the shouts of the little boy, whom they quieted by telling him that dogs were not allowed on the railway. So they were off at last; the cab presently stopped in the Rue des Londres in front of the railway offices.

The scene was curious to an observer. At the door of the establishment, where transportation tickets were taken, you saw honest men solemnly saying good-by to their families, fathers kissing

their daughters, husbands pressing their wives' hands, while the latter had tears in their eyes, as if the husband was starting for Russia or embarking for New Orleans. This was because we were not as yet familiar with this way of travelling, partly above ground, and partly subterranean, and because in Paris there were still people who would say, "To go on the railway! why, it is to take your life in your hands!"

However, M. Grenat had taken his wife's arm and his son's hand, signing to his daughter that she should follow them. The whole family went into the establishment, where, confused by the crowd which surrounded them and by the confusion around them, M. Grenat walked about the corridors for a long time without being able to find the office where they were to take their tickets.

"Are we on it now?" demanded Benjamin, looking at his father.

"On what?"

"On the railroad! this is so stupid."

"No, no, not yet — that is to say, we are in the station."

"What are we going to do now? Shall we never have done walking about these passages?"

"It certainly is becoming very wearisome," said Madame Grenat. "Adolphine, you are following us, are you not?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Is it my fault if I can't find the ticket-office?"

"You must ask for it, monsieur; we can't pass our day in looking for this office?"

"That is so, I was just going to ask; that's what I was going to do!"

M. Grenat decided to leave his wife and his son for a moment to go and inquire where the office was, and he found he had passed it several times. Finally he asked for four places.

"For where?" the clerk asked him.

"Why, for the railway."

"I asked you where you wanted to go."

"Where, by Jove! wherever you like."

"To Saint-Germain? or to Asnières?"

"Oh, very well — I understand, I didn't quite get your meaning at first. Why to — I didn't think to ask whether Benjamin wanted to go to Saint-Germain or to Asnières. Four to Saint-Germain, worse luck."

"What places do you want?"

"What places? I don't know what you mean at all."

"Coaches or wagons?"

"Oh, very well! the best are the safest of course. When one goes on the railroad one mustn't think of the expense."

They gave M. Grenat four places in the carriages. He returned proudly towards his family saying,—

"We have tickets; four places in the best carriages. They are cushioned, wadded. We shall

be as comfortable as though in a hired box. Come, come along, for from the way people are moving I suppose it won't be long before the train starts."

The Grenat family again began to pass through the passages in search of the railway, and would again have lost themselves in the station, had not Benjamin shouted, "We must follow everybody." Thanks to this happy thought the family soon reached the great staircase which led to the starting place.

When one sees for the first time this adventurous method of travelling, this beautiful and at the same time simple invention, one cannot repress a secret emotion. The Grenat family were much moved at the sight of the carriages and the locomotive in this huge underground vault.

"Good heavens, monsieur, how queer it makes me feel," said Madame Grenat, leaning heavily on her husband's arm.

"Why, madame, you're not frightened by this, are you?" answered the jeweller, trying to smile to hide the fear which he himself experienced.

"How it smells of smoke—of pit coal," said Benjamin.

"It always does, my dear. It's just the same in the seaport towns."

"Have you ever been on the sea, papa?"

"No, but I have been to Saint-Cloud by steam; it is the same thing."

Mademoiselle said nothing, but she could not

help looking out on the road she was to travel, and for the first time she raised her beautiful eyes, one benefit already secured by the railway.

"It is only a matter now of getting into the right carriage," said M. Grenat.

"Let's make haste, papa, they're all getting in."

"Certainly, of course we must make haste. But how is one to know where to go? the smoke is stupefying."

Fortunately for the jeweller's family one of the conductors came and asked M. Grenat what places he had taken. The latter showed his tickets, and the man opened the door of a carriage in which there were already four persons. Benjamin jumped first into the coach, then Madame Grenat mounted tremblingly, then mademoiselle, then the head of the family, who sank into the cushioned seat muttering in a resigned manner which was not at all reassuring,—

"There's no turning back now — here we are, by the grace of God!"

"Oh, good heavens!" said Madame Grenat, rolling her eyes affrightedly about her. "I've a great mind to get out and go back home."

Tall Adolphine did not seem in the least frightened; she was seated beside her father and she had noticed already that the person who sat opposite her was a young man employed in a novelty shop situated exactly opposite M. Grenat's, and who often stood at the door of his place of business

since the jeweller's daughter had left school; which proves that young girls can see perfectly well without raising their eyes. In general it is very rare that women are short-sighted; that is an infirmity reserved to men; nature does everything for the best.

While Monsieur and Madame Grenat were consulting as to whether they dared remain on the railroad, little Benjamin had left his place and gone towards the open door saying,—

"I can't see anything here. I want to see, I do; I want to go in the carriage that has a stove."

"My son," said M. Grenat; "nobody goes on the locomotive; it would not be safe."

"I want to go on it, I do."

"Benjamin, I'll explain to you why you can't go on it."

"Leave me alone! I will go on it;" and Benjamin quickly descended from the coach.

"Good heavens! where is he going? he'll get himself crushed in something," cried Madame Grenat as she saw her son disappear. "M. Grenat, run after him, stop him! bring him back quick, I beg of you!"

"He's a demon," said the jeweller, getting out of the carriage. "He's afraid of nothing; he takes after me. I'll go and look after him."

Some moments rolled by; the father and son did not reappear. Madame Grenat could not resist her uneasiness; she in her turn darted out of the carriage and ran along calling Benjamin.

Benjamin had not answered his mother, but on the other hand the whistle blew as a signal for departure. The travellers came running, the crowd pressed against the rails and precipitated themselves into the carriages. In vain the officers sought to establish order, and shouted,—

"Your ticket! you don't belong here, you shouldn't have got in there."

Nobody listened to anything they said, and in one instant carriages, coaches, wagons, were invaded, filled, and Madame Grenat found herself in the midst of a group that pushed and almost carried her into a wagon. In vain the jeweller's wife looked around her, exclaiming,—

"I was not here, this isn't my place. I ought to be with my family."

No one paid any attention to the lamentations of the poor lady; a slight disturbance announced that the chain was loosened; they had started. Madame Grenat, who did not realize this, wanted to open the door and get down; a very rough hand restrained her and pushed her into her seat, while several voices exclaimed at the same time,—

"Why, madame, what are you going to do there? one can no longer get down! we are on the way."

"That is all the same to me. I wish to get out. I want to get into a coach. Stop, coachman! Let me get down!"

Shouts of laughter greeted the good woman's

exclamations, and she darted angry looks at her travelling companions.

Madame Grenat found that she was in a wagon the benches of which were guiltless of upholstery. She had on her left two men in blue blouses, cotton nightcaps, and leathern gaiters, who smelled of tobacco, ale, wine and brandy. On her right a very pretty young woman was engaged in talking to a very young man; two children, a nurse. Opposite were three young men who looked like idle, dissolute scamps; two little peasant girls who looked anything but pastoral; a coxcomb of sixty and two workmen dressed in their Sunday clothes.

The two country girls looked at the jeweller's wife and laughed jeeringly. The workmen did the same, the old coxcomb made grimaces, the young people jokes, and the two wagoners swore.

"We are one too many," said the old dandy, "there should not be so many in a wagon."

"Gentlemen, make them stop, I beg of you," said Madame Grenat, after a moment; "I wish to rejoin my family."

"It isn't going very fast yet," said one of the men in blouses to his neighbor.

"We shall go faster in a bit, you'll see; one could sharpen his knife on the rails!"

"How funny that is," answered the other, "one can't feel that one is going."

"That is what makes it so charming," said one of the young men,

"We are one too many," resumed the old coxcomb, trying to make his eyes larger to look at the pretty woman, who was talking aside without paying any attention to her neighbors.

"What a strange noise it makes," said one of the workmen.

"It's the effect of the machinery in the thing," answered his comrade, assuming a very knowing expression.

"Do you think that's what causes it?"

"Hang it! don't I know something about the mechanism, I might have been employed myself at the works where they make them; but I went there too late, I didn't know about it before."

"There! there! we're going at a fine rate now," said one of the wagoners.

"I think it is going to make me ill," said Madame Grenat, desperate because no one paid any attention to her.

"We are one too many," said the little old fop, munching a toothache lozenge to make people believe he still had teeth left.

"Is he continually going to repeat the same thing?" muttered one of the countrywomen.

"He tires me, the old parrot without feathers! he never takes his eyes off me!"

"Make a face at him!"

"Good God! where are we? one can't see a bit of light," exclaimed Madame Grenat when they got into the tunnel.

"Keep still, madame," said one of the carters, "you deafen us with your exclamations."

"But I can't see anything clearly."

"Well, neither can we."

"But it is very embarrassing to travel with strangers in the dark."

"Don't be afraid! If you were twenty years or so younger one could understand your fears; but now, mother, you could travel fifty leagues without a candle."

Madame Grenat bit her lips with vexation; her wounded self-conceit drove away her fright. She muttered between her teeth,—

"Uneducated people are very coarse in their manners to women!"

But she said it too low for her neighbors to hear it. Then she gave a great jerk with her elbow to the right, and one with her foot to the left, and breathed not a word during the whole of the way.

While these things were transpiring in the wagon which carried Madame Grenat, her husband was also experiencing his tribulations. After getting out of the carriage to look for his son the jeweller had run towards another into which he had seen a little boy mount who at a distance resembled Benjamin. When he saw his mistake he wanted to get down, but then had come the rush, M. Grenat found himself blocked between two other passengers, the train had immediately started, and he was obliged to remain where chance had placed him.

The carriage in which M. Grenat found himself was filled with very choice company; there was an English family, an old countess, accompanied by her niece, a banker of the Chaussée-d'Antin, and two barristers. There was but a single person who cast a shade over the picture; and that was a very ill-dressed little man, wearing a hat that had hardly any rim, a seedy coat, the cuffs and facings of which looked like tinder, and trousers so short that one might almost have taken them for breeches, despite the efforts of their wearer to get them down to his ankles. As for that the little man himself seemed to feel that he was out of place among all these fashionable people. He snuggled down in a corner, as far out of sight as possible, looked continually at his shoes, and when he wanted to use his handkerchief hid the process with his hat, which he took off expressly for that purpose.

M. Grenat had fallen between two Englishmen; he had smiled at them, muttering,—

"I am here in spite of myself; I ran after my son, I thought I saw him get into this coach, but I was mistaken. Where can he be? I am very uneasy about him."

The Englishmen had looked at M. Grenat without moving a muscle, nor did they answer him a word. Then the jeweller turned towards the rather shabby little man, but the latter having sneezed had quickly hidden his head in his hat.

For ten minutes the company kept the most

complete silence. However, in going into the long tunnel a little English girl having uttered an exclamation, one of her companions said to her,—

"Be quiet immediately; it is very bad form to be frightened."

The English girl was silent. But M. Grenat, who was frightened also, exclaimed as he saw the light again,—

"Confound it! I am decidedly pleased to be out of that. One ought to insure himself in the Phœnix before setting out."

The aristocratic company breathed not a word. The little threadbare man turned to take snuff from a pewter box, and M. Grenat, greatly wondering that his pleasantry produced no effect, settled his wig and retired into his cravat.

In a few moments the countess said, addressing one of the Englishmen,—

"Who and what are all these men who are placed at intervals beside the road, and who raise an arm in the air as we go by?"

"Those are the signal men; they are placed there to show the train men that they may proceed without danger. When they raise a little black flag that means that—"

"We must not—"

"We must not what?"

"Why—I meant to say—we must not—" here the Englishman was at a loss for a word and paused.

"Ah, I understand," said M. Grenat, who always wanted to mingle in the conversation. "When they move their black flag that means they've got the pest at Saint-Germain, that is very ingenious."

The Englishman turned towards the jeweller, looked at him in a very disdainful manner, then muttered,—

"You don't know what you are talking about."

M. Grenat had a momentary desire to be angry, but he thought better of it. During the rest of the journey the silence was interrupted only by two stifled sneezes in the depths of a hat.

Let us return now to M. Benjamin. After leaving his parents, he found himself against a wagon just as the train was starting. Not knowing what he could do further to join his father, the little boy began to cry. A vigorous hand had then lifted him by the arm and put him in the wagon; then a gentleman with mustaches and a medal had said to him,—

"Come, little chap, don't cry; you are all right here; you are going on the railway."

"Yes, but I am not with papa and mamma."

"Why did you leave them?"

"To see a big machine with smoke coming out of it. They are in a carriage with cushions."

"You will find them at Pecq."

"I would much rather find them now."

"That you can't do, no one can get out now, we are moving."

"But I—"

"Silence!"

"But for all that—"

"By the powers! if you are not quiet I shall be angry."

M. Benjamin was silent; for his neighbor the soldier did not seem inclined to treat him with the indulgence to which he was accustomed.

Presently conversation ensued between the persons in the wagon. They were a grisette, several shopkeepers from the capital, three soldiers, and a middle-aged gentleman who, with much affectation, kept drawing from his pocket a copper gilt snuffbox, into which he plunged two fingers on which were huge rings with false stones. He would then describe a semicircle with his arm in such a manner that when he took snuff his neighbor on the right was obliged to make himself as small as possible so as not to receive a thrust from an elbow in his face.

"Gentlemen," said one of the shopkeepers looking around on his fellow-travellers, "I must confess that this railway is a fine thing for trade, and that the enterprise gives great facilities to travellers."

"Yes, it is very fine," said one of the soldiers, "but when they can put cavalry in the wagons that will be finer still, because then they can go a hundred leagues without knocking up the horses."

"I see nothing impossible in that, monsieur; they have put post boxes in the omnibuses."

"I want to go and find my papa," said Benjamin.

"Silence, child! brats are not allowed to speak here."

The man with the false stones described a circle with his arm, saying,—

"What is necessary, above all, is that the enterprise ha, ha! hum! should be profitable to the theatres."

And the gentleman began singing in a contralto voice beating the time on his snuffbox. "'Ah, lovely day' — one, two — 'we'll sing of glory' — one, two, three, four — 'for lover gay' — one, two — 'what victory.'"

"Are we going into a long tunnel?" asked the grisette, while the gentleman was still singing.

"Yes, mademoiselle," answered the soldier who had lifted Benjamin in, "that is to say under an arch; but be quite easy, there isn't the slightest danger. Come little one, keep your legs still or I shall thump you, by the powers!"

"It must be much more terrifying when one is in the tunnel under the Thames," said a tradesman.

"Oh, yes," answered the singer, "I have often heard tell of the tunnel under the Thames, they assert it to be as light as the Passage des Panoramas. It seems to me they should build an opera house there. 'Ah, lovely day' — one, two — 'for lover gay' — one, two! Will you take a pinch, monsieur?"

"Willingly."

"It is pure Virginia; I never take any other."

"Monsieur is on the stage, I wager."

"You are not mistaken. First bass singer in opera. I lead — "

"The orchestra?"

"No the choruses. I am called at this moment to Perigueux, where I am assured they have some very bad choruses, but I shall mend all that. 'Ah lovely day' — one, two — 'we'll sing of glory' — one, two, three, four."

At this moment they entered the long tunnel, M. Benjamin gave vent to frightful howls when he saw how dark it was; and as he would not be quiet his neighbor the soldier gave him a little slap on the cheek, saying,—

"It is necessary to correct poltroons early, or else when they grow up they will be cowards."

Benjamin had never received the slightest personal chastisement in his life, and the correction produced such an effect upon him that during the whole remainder of the journey he dared neither talk, nor move, nor budge.

At length they arrived at Pecq just as the opera singer was repeating his one, two for the twentieth time. The soldier himself helped the little boy out of the wagon, saying to him in a softened tone,—

"Come, we have ended by being good, then. I knew that I should make something of you."

Benjamin did not answer, but he set off running,

for he perceived his father, who had rejoined his wife, who had recovered her daughter. They fell into each other's arms; it seemed as if they had not seen each other for ten years. Madame Grenat kissed even her daughter, which only happened under extraordinary circumstances.

So far as that goes, the railway journey had borne its fruits; the jeweller's wife was infinitely less coquettish, the jeweller himself was less talkative, Benjamin much more obedient, and the tall Adolphine had learned that she was pretty, for the clerk from the novelty shop had told her so several times on the way. No one, then, can as yet deny the utility of the railway.

THE GRISETTES' BALL

MADEMOISELLE ADOLPHINE, a little seamstress who did plain needlework in her own room, was a pretty dark girl, provokingly coquettish and the least bit roguish in her appearance; her waist was slender, her form rounded, her ankle slender, her foot—well, it was not small, but it was well-made, with a finely-arched instep, which is highly preferable to a small, flat foot. In fact, Mademoiselle Adolphine was a very pleasing little person, and she could hardly stir out of doors without making some sort of a conquest; that, how-

ever, is neither here nor there, for the very plainest women make them sometimes. There are so many men in Paris who do not know how to employ either their time or themselves, and who in default of something better to do think they must follow and accost all the women they meet without escorts. They will follow this one for her general appearance, the other for her waist, another for her ankle, and yet another for her foot; and as it is rare to find a woman absolutely devoid of attraction, these gentlemen always find some one to follow and must inevitably be extremely tired at the end of their day's work.

In short, Mademoiselle Adolphine, with her twenty-two years, her handsome black eyes, her little snub nose and her saucy expression, must often have been followed, for men are very fond of saucy looks and enticing eyes; and wherefore? Faith, you must ask them; as to me, I suspect the reason, but I can hardly go into it at full length in this little story.

A great outcry has already been made about me because I called one of my novels "The Cuckold." As for that, if I had to name it again, I can assure you I should give it the same title, because I am not in the habit of concerning myself with the cavillings of the critics, who are not the real public.

But all this is leading me from my charming needlewoman, to whom I must now return. Adolphine had the reputation of being rather flighty,

and some even went so far as to say she had lovers, on the grounds that with ravishing eyes, a snub nose, and a tripping walk, it was impossible for a girl to be as good as she ought.

This inference will be very far from pleasing to those damsels who resemble the portrait of Adolphine which I have just drawn; but they may reassure themselves, for everybody knows that appearances are deceitful; a young woman may be very well-conducted though she be very attractive and is always merry and laughing, while those who have a timid, modest air and always keep their eyes cast down often act very foolishly. It occurs to me that I have sought to prove this in one of my earlier works, which also has a horrid title, "la Pucelle de Belleville."

It is true that, like the one I spoke of a short time back, it has a moral aim, while some novels with irreproachable titles are very immoral. But I am again getting away from my grisette; I will return to her and I promise you I will not wander again.

For some time past a young and handsome bachelor named Edouard had paid Mademoiselle Adolphine very assiduous attentions. As Adolphine loved to laugh and talk, he had not found much difficulty in making her acquaintance. As Edouard had means, and as his dress and manners were distinguished, she had been flattered by his preference, and for some time past the young man had visited Adolphine at her home.

When a man obtains permission to call and see a grisette it is natural for him to think that he can obtain other favors, and that he may at last arrive at the consummation of his desires. This was what M. Edouard had thought, and with this idea he had endeavored to evince his love in the warmest manner possible. But to his great surprise he was defeated in his attempt; first of all she had laughed at his sighs, then she had got angry when he had become audacious and had said to him in a very positive manner,—

"If you wish me to allow you to keep on coming to see me, you must behave properly."

To which Edouard had replied,—

"Is there anything improper in being in love? Why are you pretty? Why have you turned my head? I shall die if you will not be mine." He added a thousand other similar phrases which ordinarily have a good deal of effect on women who ask nothing better than to yield; but Adolphine only laughed again as she said,—

"I am not at all sure that you are in love with me; if you do love me, you will not prove it by acting as you do. I shall give myself only to the man I marry, yes, monsieur, to my husband. Does that surprise you? — because I like to laugh, because I am a little coquettish and don't lower my eyes when people look at me. However, that is how it is, though. As to dying if I will not be yours, why, M. Edouard, I don't like such sayings

any more than I like story books that are full of nothing but murders, corpses and suicides; it disgusts me and that is all; I call that the literature of the criminal courts and, although I am only a simple working girl, I think I show some taste by preferring scenes that are natural, cheerful, touching without being horrible, to those which make me shudder by day and give me the nightmare by night."

Edouard was silent, but as he wished to continue to visit Adolphine he was obliged to promise to be respectful and correct in his behavior; but men will promise anything, they think it binds them to nothing.

So Edouard continued to visit Adolphine; when she refused to kiss him, he sulked; and when he got very sulky Adolphine made fun of him. Sometimes several days passed, during which Edouard ceased to call on the pretty seamstress, hoping to be able to forget her; but soon his love drew him back to her side. She smiled as he approached, gave him her hand in token of friendship, and tapped him lightly when he tried to kiss her.

It happened to be carnival time, the time for pleasure, dancing and fritters. All classes of society were amusing themselves; the smaller clerks gave parties, the rich trader rivalled the nobility in luxury, the bourgeoise circles had their raffles, the porters made pancakes in their lodges, and the greater part of the grisettes went to the bal masque.

Edouard had several times proposed to Adolphine to let him take her to the ball; but she refused, she did not wish to pass the night at a ball with Edouard nor did she care to come home alone at night with a man whom she had so much difficulty in reducing to order in the daytime. Edouard, vexed at Adolphine's refusal, went to the ball without her and came less often to see her.

Adolphine in the depths of her heart suffered, fearing she should lose Edouard's love; for a turned-up nose does not prevent one from being sensitive, and a saucy expression sometimes hides a very loving heart.

One fine evening several of Adolphine's girl friends were with her; these young ladies were working a little and talking a great deal.

"Everybody's giving balls," said big Sophie, "it's all the rage. There's a polisher in my house who gave a fancy-dress ball, and they say it was very pretty. There were Spaniards and Turks and shepherds and Robert Macaires, it seems everything was done in great style."

"I'm invited," said a little flower-maker, "I've been invited to go to a rout at a chair-turner's. They are to have supper, to go masked or unmasked, to have some punch and ices, card tables and parlor games, they'll dance galops and eat warm cakes."

"In all the houses where I go to carry work home I see preparations for balls and festivities."

"Yes, even my neighbor, who is a charwoman in apartment houses, gave a party one night where they drank as much beer as they wanted and ate sausages at three o'clock in the morning."

"And my portress bakes puff-paste tarts in a stove in her lodge; and her husband puts lard on his queue and looks comical enough, as you can imagine."

"In fact, everybody in Paris is giving parties or balls."

"Well, girls, why shouldn't we do as everybody else does?"

"We? We give a ball?" said the grisettes in a chorus.

"Certainly, if you like!"

"Oh, we should like it well enough, but how can we do it?"

"Listen to me. As to the place, I offer mine; I have a great, big room and when we have taken the furniture out it will be still larger; and then I have two small rooms which will serve as dressing-room and dining-room."

"Well, what then?"

"And then — oh, there will be some expense for lights and refreshments and supper — for we must have some supper, mustn't we?"

"Oh, yes."

"As for me, I only go to a dance to eat," said big Sophie.

"Well, then, girls, let us club together and if,

as I hope, you have confidence in me, I will attend to all the details."

"Approved! Let us club together."

All the young girls felt in their pockets, which resulted in their gathering together the sum of twenty-three francs; but with that they were sure of having as much more from the young girls they knew—fifty francs was what they considered necessary, for the grisettes did not want their sweethearts to pay; it was their treat, a ball which they wished to give, themselves.

Adolphine was well aware that she could not give ices with fifty francs; but she promised a violin, a flageolet, cider and chestnuts during the evening, and a very satisfactory supper in the middle of the night. Everything decided, they fixed the day and even thought of the invitation notes. A young fringe-maker, who wielded her pen well, placed herself at a table and wrote what Adolphine dictated to her.

You are invited to come to dance and to spend the evening and the whole of the night at Mademoiselle Adolphine's next Saturday; there will be supper and a violin.

I have the honor to remain,

Yours, etc.

"Will that do, girls?"

"Very well indeed."

"Oh, wait! Fœdora, write by 'post scriptum.'"

"By post, what do you mean by that?"

"Write some more; put it below the signature.

'Those who have not arrived by nine o'clock will not dance the galop.'"

"Oh, that's good! That's the only way to force those gentlemen to come early."

"Now, Fœdora, write as many notes as we have invitations to give, and then I shall have nothing to do but sign them. Now, girls, name the persons you want invited."

Each damsel gave the name of her swain. In short the list of invitations was soon written; the girls now had only to think of the costumes they should make for the ball. This was the subject of conversation for the remainder of the evening; at length the grisettes parted, delighted at the thought of the pleasure they expected on the following Saturday.

Adolphine had not failed to write an invitation and send it to M. Edouard, then she thought of nothing else but how she could make her party successful. Her friends had given her later the sum of thirty francs, which with the twenty-three francs she had already received, placed the sum of fifty-three francs at her disposal; for her part she was willing to add fifteen francs, if necessary, in order that nothing might be lacking at her ball.

The young girl made her calculations. She must have two lanterns for the staircase, then for the room it was necessary that she should hire four lamps; for a ball, to be cheerful, must be well-lighted. Then Adolphine made out a menu for

the supper, she must have some substantial dishes, a fowl and a pasty for the men and some dainties for the women; for she wished to suit all tastes.

After reflecting for some time, the young seamstress made the following list of expenses for her ball,—

	Fr.	Sous.
Two lanterns		10
Hire of four Argand lamps and oil to feed them	7	10
Candles in the small rooms		10
Sugar, cider, chestnuts, cracknels	8	00
Pasty, fowl, sausages	16	00
Violin	6	00
Pastry and sweets	9	00
Wine and coffee	15	00
	62	10

Thus, for the trifling sum of sixty-two francs, ten sous (grisettes will never reckon by centimes), Adolphine hoped to give a charming ball. Up to Saturday the young girl was employed on her gown, she was going to have a little Swiss peasant's costume; she made it herself, she tried it on and thought to herself, "We shall see what effect it will have on M. Edouard to see me in that."

At length the great day arrived, the preparations must be made, the lamps hired; but first she must make sure of some one to play the violin. Adolphine went to the dwelling of one who had been recommended to her, and found it was in a very poor house in the Rue des Gravilliers. Adolphine

went into an alleyway; she looked around for a porter, but there was none; she went up one flight of stairs, then another, saying to herself,—

"A violinist who plays at balls wouldn't live on the first floor, especially a poor violinist who only asks six francs a night, and furnishes a flageolet."

Adolphine decided to knock at the third floor, because she heard music through the door. A young man holding a lamp in one hand came to open the door himself; but he was a music-teacher, and inside the room she could see several stylish young people, each of them holding an instrument.

The grisette feared she was mistaken and stammered,—

"I should like to speak to M. Dupont."

"Who is M. Dupont? I don't know him, mademoiselle."

"Why, monsieur, he is a musician, a man who plays dance music on the violin at balls."

"Oh, wait a bit, mademoiselle. I think in fact we have an Orpheus—a poor musician, in the house. I am not yet acquainted with my neighbors, but if you would want him I'm afraid you'll find him quite at the top."

Adolphine bowed graciously and hurried up the stairs, she stopped on the sixth floor and listened for the sound of a violin, but she heard no music; on the contrary, she thought she distinguished sighs and sobs. However, she decided to knock at a door in front of which she was standing.

Some one opened it, and what a painful scene met her eyes. In a half-furnished room a sick man lay on a miserable bed; beside him was a weeping woman and two children, a boy of eight and a little girl who could hardly have attained the age of five; yet both of them were already pale and sorrowful sharers of their parents' troubles.

"Excuse me," said Adolphine, "no doubt I have made a mistake again, I want M. Dupont, a violinist who plays for balls."

"This is the place, mademoiselle," said the person who was in the bed, in a feeble voice. "I am Dupont. Do you need my services?"

"Yes, monsieur; it was for a little ball this evening at my place. My name is Adolphine, a seamstress, Rue aux Ours. But if you are sick—"

"Oh, yes, mademoiselle," answered the young woman, "my husband is very sick, he has overworked himself in trying to earn money for us all. We have had our poor father bedridden for a long time—then my little girl—in fact we have been very unfortunate for some time past—and now here is my husband—"

"It's worry that makes father ill," said the little boy, "it is because they will sell our furniture tomorrow if we don't pay the landlord."

"Hold your tongue, Jules, hold your tongue," said the young woman, "you must not tell such things as those."

"Poor people!" said Adolphine, greatly moved

by this scene of distress. "Can any one be barbarous enough to sell your effects? Oh, some landlords are very cruel, very hardhearted. Do you owe him so much?"

"Eighty francs," answered the young woman, "and my poor husband is heartbroken, because he has not the strength to go to work and earn that amount."

"And I," added the little boy, "don't play the flageolet well enough yet to play without papa's accompaniment."

Adolphine reflected, but she said nothing. Suddenly she left the room, exclaiming, "I'll be back!" She ran home, got the sixty-two francs fifty centimes destined for the ball, and with what money she possessed made up the eighty francs; then she flew to the Rue des Gravilliers, went up the six flights of stairs without stopping to take breath, went into the poor violinist's, placed the money on a table beside the bed saying,—

"There! take that and pay your landlord; don't worry any more and you will get well. We others can dance without music and enjoy ourselves without supper."

The poor family did not know how to express their gratitude. Adolphine kissed the two children and escaped, saying,—

"Good-by, I'll come and see you again."

The grisette went back home, her heart satisfied and as light as a bird. For the first few moments

she thought only of the poor people she had helped. But at length she remembered the ball that she was to give that evening; then she began to laugh and said to herself,—

"Those who go without their dinner so as to eat more supper will run a great risk of being faint at their stomachs. All the same I shall still put on my Swiss costume, it won't cost me any more."

Adolphine dressed herself, got her room ready for the evening and awaited her company with a single lighted candle, which she placed on the mantelpiece. It hardly gave any light at all in the big room, but Adolphine had not one sou to her name, this was her last candle, and she did not buy on credit.

Half-past seven came. Adolphine's girl friends arrived promptly, and she heard them shouting on the staircase,—

"Adolphine, why don't you show us a light? It's us. Why haven't you got your lanterns lighted yet? It is very disagreeable when one is in ball dress to have to grope one's way up four flights of stairs."

Adolphine appeared with her lighted candle. The young girls when they came into her room exclaimed again,—

"Good heavens! how dark it is here! why aren't your lamps in their places and lighted? What are you thinking of to leave us in the dark like this?"

To all this Adolphine answered with a smile,—

"Have a little patience, they are going to bring lamps and lanterns."

The young men invited by these damsels speedily arrived and were not a little surprised to see the ball-room lighted by a solitary candle, while the grisettes became impatient and kept saying,—

"Why, Adolphine, when are they going to bring your lamps?"

"And the music, where is that?"

"Oh, it will come," answered Adolphine. "And while we are waiting for it, girls, we can dance some round dances."

"We don't give a ball to dance round dances," said the grisettes. "What will these gentlemen think of us?"

The young gentlemen said nothing, but they laughed mockingly. Edouard watched Adolphine closely, but said nothing; the gentle seamstress was growing very much embarrassed; several of the damsels had already asked for refreshments and she had had to say to them,—

"The refreshments haven't come."

In fact, as the lights, the music and the refreshments did not come, the grisettes lost patience and fat Sophie said to Adolphine,—

"My dearest, you had charge of the ball — and you have done nothing at all. What does it mean? What have you done with our collection?"

Adolphine reddened, hesitated and at length answered,—

"Here is our music, and I imagine it will be first-class."
PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY WILLIAM GLACKENS.

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" Mesdemoiselles, I dare not tell you. Well, I lost my bag in which I had all my money and that is why I could provide nothing for our ball."

The young girls seemed overwhelmed with consternation, the young men laughed; Edouard consoled Adolphine, and reproached her for not calling on him for aid. However, whisperings and vexation had replaced cheerfulness and merriment! some of these damsels even appeared to be in doubt as to the loss of the bag, and Adolphine was getting angry, when some one knocked at the door.

It was five well-dressed young men, each holding an instrument: violins, 'cello, flageolet, sufficient to compose a delightful orchestra.

" O Adolphine, you were making fun of us!" cried the young girls, " here is our music, and I imagine it will be first-class."

"Why, no, I told the truth," said Adolphine. " Gentlemen, you are no doubt mistaken as to the place."

" No, mademoiselle," answered a young man, whom Adolphine recognized as the one who lived in the same house as the poor people she had succored. " We came, my friends and I, to have the pleasure of playing for you to dance in place of my neighbor, this poor Dupont, who is ill in bed and to whom you so generously gave all the money with which you were to have paid the expenses of your ball. It was through his son that we learned

of your good action, and we hope you will allow us to act as your orchestra throughout the whole night."

These words disclosed the truth; they surrounded Adolphine, they hugged her, they kissed her; those who had scolded her asked her pardon with tears in their eyes; the enthusiasm and joy were shared by all. In one moment the young men had run out in search of lamps and candles; the ballroom was brilliantly lighted; then the waiters, pastry-cooks and lemonade dealers arrived with the supper, for Edouard had taken it upon himself to provide that, and when Adolphine objected to this he answered her tenderly,—

"It will be our betrothal banquet."

A PARISIAN HOUSE

IF you would like to know anything about the inside of a house, to know the names of the persons who reside in it, their occupations, their habits and their fortunes, you need not have an Asmodeus at your orders; it will be quite sufficient to talk for a few moments to the porter.

I was desirous some time ago of renting an apartment in a very respectable-looking, handsome house; the porter did not give me time to ask for information.

"Our house," said he, "is tenanted by the best of people from the top to the bottom; this shop,

which occupies the whole façade, is occupied by a provision dealer. Ah, monsieur, there is a man who understands his business; he has deer and hares at his door throughout the year, as well as pheasants and pâtes de Perigord that make the mouth water, and then all the passers-by stop in front of our house to admire. I have even seen an old gentleman who never fails to come in the morning to eat his penny roll in front of the shop when the smell of truffles from it scents all the neighborhood. This merchant will make his fortune, although the neighbors opposite assert that the same deer has been hanging in front of the shop for the past six months. Foreign goods come to him in great abundance, and he has just married a young girl who brought as her dowry twelve hundred barrels of deep sea tunny.

"The entresol is let to a woman, an artist; she is a very distinguished personage, who receives nobody but gentlemen in carriages, English lords, Russians or Italians. I can't tell you whether she is a singer or a dancer; but she must be one or the other, for I always hear them singing, and she always walks on the tips of her toes. Then she is very decent in her behavior and dresses very elegantly in cashmeres and diamonds, and pays her rent very promptly.

"On the first floor we have a bill-broker or business man, I can't say which; but he's one of those men who receive a great many people and make

a great spread. He has spent a good deal in painting, papering, wainscoting and repairs—they say, between ourselves, that he hasn't paid for them yet. However, he often gives parties, concerts, balls, where they serve punch and play cards like the deuce. Sometimes they stay late into the night; but I can't complain, for they give me the old cards and I sell them to a tobacconist who makes them as good as new, and they are infinitely kind to me. They are persons whom I esteem very highly and whom I intend to keep.

"On the second floor lodges a tailor who keeps a cab, and never goes afoot to measure a customer. He has only been in business three years and he has already bought a fine house in the outskirts of Paris. It seems that this man cuts out by the wholesale and that he makes a very good fit. He tells me that in five years he will have done enough to retire with fifteen thousand livres income. Just see that, monsieur! and here for thirty-two years have I been opening and shutting a door, and I haven't been able to lay aside ten crowns.

"On the third floor we have a household with two children and a dog. The husband is a government clerk about forty years old. I have never seen him go out with his wife, though she is still very good-looking. He starts out in the morning, comes back to dinner, then goes out immediately after his coffee, and doesn't come in till midnight. Every day the same thing. It is true

madame receives visitors — among others a fair young man. I don't know if he is a friend of the husband's, but this is sure, he comes every evening when the master of the house has gone out and leaves half an hour before the latter comes in. But of course the little woman must have some distraction. And then the maid says when she is with her husband they do nothing but dispute. Why, I ask myself, do such men as those marry?

"On the fourth floor we have a dancing-master who gives little carpet dances every week in his room, but only to his pupils; it is true they are allowed to bring their friends, who can also bring their acquaintances. But as for that it is quite respectable, bourgeoise. My wife furnishes the refreshments; beer and water, to prevent hemorrhages of the lungs. The dancing-master himself furnishes the music all alone, but he makes as much noise as ten musicians, and he always plays near an open window so as to be heard in the street. The young ladies don't waltz without their mothers' express permission.

"On the fifth floor, which is the attic, you know, one can't look for stylish people. We have there at the present an old woman and her two daughters — they are small fry. The mother is infirm; the daughters are, I believe, sewing girls; they work all day and sometimes even far into the night — about which I must carry a complaint to the landlord because some fine night they may set us

all on fire. Besides, they are two terms behind with their rent, and as you may suppose we shall have to put them out, because in a house such as this one can have none but respectable people."

The porter had done; I departed, casting a sad glance at the attic floor; for it was there only that I perceived "respectable" people. But they were going to put out two poor young girls who worked the greater part of the night to support their mother!

THE ARTIFICIAL FLOWER-MAKERS' WORKSHOP

LET us go into this workshop, where I see there are only women; they are almost all young, and some of them are very pretty. Leaning over these long tables heaped with cambric, colors, glue, pincers, wire, cut-out leaves, these damsels are making flowers. How skilful they are! how quick, how dexterous, what taste they display in their work. The flowers which grow under their fingers as if by enchantment might, if they had but the scent, vie for freshness and beauty with those of our gardens.

But while working these young women talk; the conversation never languishes, sometimes there is a babel of tongues. It seems that women can easily do two things at once, for while they are chatting the flowers continue to grow under their hands.

"What fun I had last evening," said a pretty dark girl, with a rose-leaf skin and lively eyes.

"What did you do, Fanny?"

"I went to the circus, with my cousin, you know."

"Oh, yes; the dark young fellow who was waiting for you the other evening in the passageway."

"Exactly so."

"He is nice, it is a pity he squints a little."

"No, mademoiselle, he doesn't squint."

"Oh, yes, my dear, I'm very sure of it, for he

looked very hard at me as I passed by him — Lise, give me the glue."

"I don't know whether he 'looked very hard at you,' but I do know that he does not squint. Do you want to make out that you know better than I do? That's a little too much!"

"Don't be uneasy, I don't want to take him away from you, but he does squint; wait, Louise was with me, she can say. Didn't he squint, Louise?"

"I should think so, indeed; one of his eyes is blue and the other gray. Pass me the hyacinth petals."

"You are great story-tellers; and how could you have seen the color of his eyes in the passage-way, where one can't see anything."

"Yes, that's true," said the other young girls, "that is impossible."

"Oh, how malicious those girls are! Louise ought to be ashamed; she who has no one to walk with her but her old fellow, who always looks as if he was frozen. The scissors, if you please."

"Old fellow, indeed! Is a man old at fifty-three? It's the prime of life, girls!"

"Ha, ha! a pretty prime! Who's got the pincers?"

"Besides, there are a great many young men who are not half so good; and then I don't like men unless they are of the very best class!"

"Why, does he belong to the very best class?

I have my doubts as to that; I should take him for an old weaver; the rim of his hat is always broken."

"Oh, what a calumny. It's all very well for your squint-eyed cousin to wear bad hats or more often caps."

"Mademoiselle Louise, I beg of you not to make insulting remarks about my cousin, or I shall complain to madame."

"Well, I declare! Do you think I'm afraid you'll get me scolded? (Low) Hum! how malicious that girl is."

"Hum! what a bad tongue."

"I shall have to leave here because of her; I can't bear the sight of her! I detest her!"

"Come, peace now, girls," said a flower-maker who was rather older than the rest. "Instead of quarrelling, you had better hurry yourselves; they are waiting for these ball wreaths."

"Goodness, they will be made."

"What is the matter with you, Amelie? You are not saying anything."

"Oh, she is thinking of her new acquaintance."

"Wait, you don't know about him. Oh, he is handsome, tall, smartly dressed, an English lord, or a Russian from Moscow; is he not, Amelie?"

"Oh, you may pretend to make fun of me, girls, but that young man there — Some moss, if you please. The young man has a good position, he is a clerk at least. Heavens! you should see his style.

I went out with him last Tuesday, he had on a cloak—"

"A cloak, the deuce! this is getting serious!"

"And how were you dressed?"

"I wore my merino frock. Tuesday he took me to dine at a restaurant."

"Heavens, how fortunate she is! Some leaves, girls."

"Were you in a private room?"

"He wanted to be — but I wouldn't consent to that, and so he had to go into the public dining-room."

"And in the evening, where did you go?"

"Why, my dear, he took me to the play — to a place, wait till I think of the name — it was fine; it was at the — oh, at the Bouffes."

"What do you mean with your Bouffes?"

"Yes, where they only talk Latin and always to music."

"Oh, it was the Bouffa, you meant."

"Yes, that's it, the Bouffa. Oh, they play pretty comedies there."

"It must be very amusing when you don't understand anything they say."

"Well, all the same, it is very amusing. But for all that we came out before it was done, because I was beginning to go to sleep, and then we took a cab home — because I was tired of sitting there."

"Oh, you took a cab. Here, my rose is finished."

"It is eight o'clock, young ladies."

"Eight o'clock? Let us make haste, some one is waiting for me at Saint-Martin Square."

"And for me in front of the Gymnase."

"And for me by the Ambigu."

All the girls hastily took their shawls, their bags, their bonnets, and repaired whither their business called them. In one minute the tables were tidied, the workshop was deserted, and silence replaced the noise that had been going on since eight o'clock in the morning.

THE CHRISTENING

"WELL, neighbor, have you heard the news?"

"What news, my dear neighbor?"

"Madame Roquet's baby was born yesterday."

"You don't say so! Poor Madame Roquet—she was very disagreeable all along."

"I don't think she'll be any better now."

"Is it a girl or a boy? I had betted on a boy with M. Melange, the wine merchant opposite."

"You've won, neighbor; it's a little boy and he already looks like that little head-clerk who so often gives Madame Roquet tickets to the Gaîté."

"Good, I know whom you mean, I remember perfectly."

"But I must leave you, neighbor, I am going to the christening, and I haven't any too much time to make my toilet,"

"You'll give me some sugarplums and tell me all that passes, for I don't visit Madame Roquet since she let a beautiful cat that I'd given to her get lost."

"You may be sure I will, my dear neighbor."

While the two women were having this conversation everything was upside down at M. Roquet's, wholesale grocer of the Rue Saint-Antoine, whose wife, as you have just learned, had brought a little boy into the world.

The nurse was holding the baby, the mamma was extended gracefully on her couch; the monthly nurse was coming and going, ferreting in every corner, making a good deal of fuss about a very little thing and in the midst of it all not forgetting to take her breakfast, slipping five pieces of sugar into her coffee, while she kept asserting that she had not the slightest appetite. The servants were all upset, and the papa put the finishing touch to the disorder in the house by running about like a madman and shouting to whoever cared to hear,—

"I am a father! He's my boy, my son. He's like me, he will be a fine man! the picture of me — he's as big as an ox already! I want to make a great man of him! I shall put him into an apothecary's laboratory and into the National Guard. By the way, my dear wife, what are we going to call this young man? Roquet, first of all, because that is my name. What a pretty little Roquet he will make. But what else?"

"My dearest," said the mamma, faintly, "you know it is the godfather who must name him."

"That's right; what is the godfather's name?"

"Edouard, my dear."

"Yes, that's true, Edouard, that is a nice enough name; however, I should have preferred a more sonorous name, more — in fact — I remember a magnificent one from a melodrama, where they had robbers — just wait a bit — Ferouski — Ferouski Roquet, that's what I want to have him called."

"But, my dear, your Ferouski is a Polish name, or Cossack; it sounds ill to my ears."

"I assure you, madame, that it will be a very distinguished name, and when my son is established as an apothecary and puts over his shop door: 'Ferouski's Pharmacy,' that will necessarily bring him very distinguished customers."

But a carriage stopped in front of the house. It was the godfather, the young head-clerk in full dress, holding under his arm a pile of boxes of sugarplums and giving his other hand to the godmother, who carried the customary huge bouquet. They kissed each other and the gifts were presented.

"Oh, M. Edouard! how foolish of you," said the mamma on receiving the boxes of sugarplums, while M. Roquet said to the young man, in a penetrating voice, as he squeezed his hand,—

"My dear fellow, I shall not forget that you are my son's godfather, and from this time out everything is in common between us."

Everybody admired the baby; M. Roquet bowed every time they said anew that the newcomer would be charming. At last they started for the Mairie; but the carriage was full before M. Roquet was ready; he followed it at a distance on foot, and along the road exclaimed, rubbing his hands,—

"It's a christening! It's my son, Ferouski Edouard Roquet, whom we are going to christen."

After the usual ceremonies had been performed they returned to the paternal house, where a grand feast had been prepared. They sat down to the table; they drank, laughed, sang even, but with lowered voices so as not to do harm to the mamma; and at the close of the day, M. Roquet was so pleased, so gloriously delighted, that he exclaimed,—

"If I were a millionnaire I should like my wife to present me with a child every month."

REVIEWING LOVE LETTERS

ONE is often delighted to find, in an idle moment, something that will drive away melancholy thoughts or reflections which are not as philosophical as one would wish. I am in that case, and, to distract myself, I must have recourse to this casket, which I have not opened for a very long time; so long, in fact, that I have quite forgotten the nature of its contents.

What do I see? A pile of letters in divers handwritings. Ah, I remember now, that is where I formerly kept my sweethearts' letters. Several years have passed since then. I have travelled, run about the world; they have forgotten me, which is quite natural, and the casket has remained unopened. I will read over, as they come, some of these letters; I shall not experience the same pleasure as when first I read them, but I feel that I shall still feel some. Is not happiness composed of memories and hopes?

DEAR FRIEND.— Each day I feel that I care for you more. I am unhappy when away from you; lacking your presence I languish, I suffer, and I sigh incessantly. If you should cease to love me I shall die. Yes, death would be preferable to your inconstancy.

This was from the passionate Rosamonde. How fiercely love's fire flamed in her heart! But for a long time past she has been married, she has three children, and she has grown so stout that she can hardly walk. I met her about a week ago. No one would ever suspect, who saw her now, that she had wished to die for love's sweet sake. Let us look at another.

You are a wretch. I hate you! I detest you! I saw you casting sweet glances at your neighbor. If all the women knew you as I do, no one would want to see you. Good-by, monsieur, do not hope to deceive me longer; henceforth all is over between us.

Charming Hortense! how well I remember the

scenes you used to make me. You were a very agreeable, very witty woman, but too jealous, too exacting. The day after that on which I received this letter she was with me at seven o'clock in the morning. Let us pass to another.

Good heavens! my dear friend, I do not know what is the matter with me now, but since I have known you I am no longer the same. Mamma scolds me because I am dreamy, but am I to blame in thinking continually of the pretty things you have said to me? I don't care for anything now; my piano wearies me, drawing tires me, dancing even has lost its charm for me. They scold me because I am so pale. Alas! I feel that I am really very ill, for I sigh all day, and my heart is so full that I want to cry. You told me you would tell me what was the cause of my feeling so ill, and it was that I might know this that I secretly write to you.

Sweet child! how naïve, how pleading, how innocent in her style! Who would have believed that, at the end of six months, the perfidious girl would have no thought for any one but her cousin, the hussar. This is what one gets by trusting to one of your ingenues. Let's look at this one.

I am greatly surprised, monsieur, that you should fail to keep your appointment with me; it was not fitting that I should wait in vain; you should have shown more regard for a woman like me, and not have treated me like one of the grisettes of your acquaintance.

Ha, ha! this was from that prudish Cesarine who, in society, was so severe, so cold-hearted, so disdainful, while in a tête-à-tête! And all that to

end in marrying a provincial apothecary, whom I will wager she keeps in hot water from morning till night. Madame wanted to pass for a woman of the very strictest virtue — she was angry when any one sang 'le Senateur" or "En revenant du village" before her. But prudes are as deceptive as ingenues. Let us go on to another.

Do you want to make another Nina of me? You condemn me to say, "There will be one tomorrow." But tomorrow comes, and no letter; and still I must not be vexed, because you will not like that. Well, in less than a week I shall see the only being that I love — but that is a very indifferent matter to you! If I were quite sure of that, however, I would never again look into those naughty eyes, which fill my mind with such sweet uneasiness.

Amiable Eugenie, how much I liked your natural, truthful style, often witty, without striving to be so. How well you wrote of love. In reading your letters I was enchanted, though I must confess I was less so when I learned that you had written like ones to twenty others before me. Oh, the women! the women! But what is this prettily folded note which still smells of musk and ambergris?

Come, for I await you, I have had the horses put in my barouche. We will go and breakfast at Enghien, return to dinner at the Palais-Royal; then, in the evening, we'll go to the Opéra. I am free for the whole day.

This was from the brilliant Eleonore, she drove pleasure as fast as she lived; with her one was

never dull, never bored for a moment; but it was hardly possible to know her for a month without being completely ruined. Poor woman, I met her yesterday in the street. What a change had been wrought in her in six years; I saw a thin, debilitated woman, meanly dressed, whose features and whole person gave evidence of misfortune — it was Eleonore. I dared not accost her, fearing to make trouble for her, though I should have liked to do something for her — we will read no more of these. I think I should have done better to burn them long ago.

THE ROSEBUSH

IF our brilliant and noisy capital is the centre for gambling, pleasure, spectacles, lively adventures and comical scenes, touching deeds and acts of friendship, of sensibility, are not strangers to it either, they are perhaps more common than one would think. If we know less about them, it is because the French, always inclined to laugh, would rather relate a joke than a sentimental anecdote.

In one of the most populous quarters of this city lived a poor woman, who, having lost successively her husband and her children, found herself forced to work for her living. She was no longer young and she lived on the fifth floor; in consideration for her age, the persons who employed her had their work carried to her and sent

for it when it was done, in order that she might not tire herself by going up and down the stairs so often.

In a house opposite to that in which this poor lady lodged, a young girl of eighteen, pretty, gentle, and virtuous, an orphan moreover, lived alone in a little room on the sixth floor, the window of which was exactly opposite to that of the old lady.

The young girl earned her living by embroidering and worked assiduously all day, seated beside her window, her only distraction being to tend and care for a beautiful rosebush which she placed every day on her window-sill. Probably the superintendent of police never looked at that particular window.

While seated at her embroidery frame the young girl perceived her neighbor, whose respectable appearance pleased her, for she was not one of those damsels who turn the mammas into ridicule. For her part the good lady was delighted at the modesty of the young girl, and the skill which she exhibited in her work. They bowed to each other, they spoke; at length the young girl, as she went for or brought back her work, would go up to the old lady's, so that presently the most sincere friendship was formed between these two persons. Although so different in age, their ideas were the same; the younger looked upon the elder as her mother, and the latter felt as if, in the young girl, she had regained one of her lost children.

This connection endured for almost a year; it was not one of those formed and dispelled by caprice. But the poor young embroideress fell sick; continual bending over her work had weakened her chest, and that cruel malady which so often develops in the springtime of life in a short time made the most terrible ravages in her person.

What troubled the young girl most was the fact that she could not go so often to see her whom she called mother. To go down six flights of stairs, and climb five others, became too fatiguing to the young girl, whose strength decreased day by day, and the old lady could with difficulty leave her armchair.

They necessarily had to content themselves with seeing each other at the window. The young embroideress put her rosebush out every morning and took it in at evening. As long as the rosebush was not on the window-sill, the old lady knew that her young friend had not as yet opened the window; she remained, however, beside her own and watched for her child that she might show her some little friendly signs.

Every day, however, the rosebush was put out later, for the young invalid could no longer get up early. She was fading away without being aware of it; but her poor neighbor perceived the frightful change that was working upon her, and when the rosebush was very late in making its appearance her uneasiness became greater.

The poor little thing made superhuman efforts to reach and open her window still; but a day came when it was impossible to her to do so, her old friend waited vainly for the rosebush to appear. The day rolled by and she saw no sign of it.

"Alas!" said the good lady, "I have lost my child."

In fact, the young embroideress was no more, they found her near the rosebush, which she had made a last but unavailing effort to show to her old friend.

SHE WAS SO PRETTY

I HAD sworn never to love again; deceived, betrayed a hundred times, I had made up my mind not to fly from a sex, the society of which made the charm of my life; but, at least, to view it with indifference, and only to look on beauty from the standpoint of the connoisseur, just as those gamblers who have learned wisdom content themselves by judging the game without taking part in it. But alas! men's vows are written in sand! and how could I resist love when the vision of Clarisse dawned upon me? She was so pretty!

I forgot my vows; I bade good-by to wisdom and often to reason; how could one preserve that near her? Grace, carriage, features, freshness, everything pleasing was united in her; one had to love her. Everybody yielded to her sway; I did

like everybody else, but I should have liked to be the only one to love her — we are all egotists. For some time I believed that my love was returned; she made me believe all that she wished. How could I doubt words spoken by so charming a mouth? Then, even when her coquetry had saddened me, with a word, a smile, she would dissipate my suspicions. She was so pretty!

For her I committed a thousand follies; I neglected my occupations, my relations, my friends, I would have given up everything if I might have seen her only, occupied myself only with her. I would not listen to good advice; I turned from all the representations of friendship, I had only eyes for her; I could not exist in her absence. To satisfy all her tastes, all her caprices, to comply instantly with her slightest desire, that was my sweetest occupation. For her I dissipated my fortune, I lost my time, I neglected my talents; but I regretted nothing — she was so pretty!

As the reward of so much love I was again deceived! She left me! I saw her with another. I could not even doubt as to the extent of my misfortune. As I thought of all I had done for her, of her ingratitude, her perfidy, I flattered myself that I should forget her or at least hate her as much as I had loved her. Vain was the effort, my weak heart loved her still — her image came constantly to fill it; and despite her treachery I felt that I should always adore her. She was so pretty!

But alas! her career was short; cut off at the height of her beauty, death struck her in the midst of the pleasures, the love, the seductions with which she was so constantly surrounded, and which she knew so well how to lavish in her turn. Her grace, her manifold attractions, could not stay the hand of the cruel Reaper! Clarisse has gone down to the grave! she had shone but for a moment.

All those who had surrounded her, who had sought to obtain a look, a smile, have already forgotten her to seek other conquests. I alone go to visit her grave; I alone kneel on that earth which covers the most seductive being born of nature. I think no more of the wrong she did me, I recall nothing but the sweet moments that we have passed together. If she were still living I should think myself fortunate if she would give me but one hour of love. For that hour, I would still have forgiven her everything else. She was so pretty!

THE FIRESIDE

WITH the return of winter the fireside resumes its old dominion. What should we do without it in the long and cold winter evenings? Delightful fireside nook; so cosy and confidential, the very sight of it is sufficient to call forth our cheerfulness, awaken wit, and delight solitude. Of how many circles is the fireside the greatest attraction?

Seated before his fire the author, resting from his work, dreams of his success; in its glowing depths he finds the verse which would not come to him at his desk. As he pokes it, the old man delights in memories and feels the chill of age less. In front of one's fire one lives again in one's memory the pleasures of the past or forms new hopes for the future.

Ah, the poker falls. "That's company coming," says the old lady in her chimney corner; "I am certain that before a quarter of an hour is gone by we shall see somebody—it never fails!" In fact in a few minutes the old woman's door is rattled and she goes and opens it for — her cat. "Ah," says she, "it was the poker made Moumoute come in."

Seated before their fire, with what pleasure these children listen to their nurse as she tells them stories of robbers or ghosts. The poor little things snuggle close up to one another. They are frightened by them, but how they love those stories as their gaze is fixed on the glowing flames on the hearth! If the fire were to go out, the poor children would no longer dare to look behind them.

Happy the lover who surprises the lady of his heart before her fire, where he can, having no witness but the discreet blazes, make full confession to her of his love. The fire roaring so cheerily up the chimney is often a powerful auxiliary. One is much less severe with one's feet on the fender —

and the fire has seen more than one defeat confessed.

When one gets up one goes to the fire, on leaving the table one hastens back to it. The clerk when he reaches his office greets his stove or his hearth, and while he warms himself at it he reads his paper, talks politics or literature ; beside it he trims his pen and eats his luncheon roll.

With his back to the fire and his face to the table, the gastronomer laughs at the evils which afflict poor humanity. But as he warms himself he does not, he cannot see the unfortunate creature who stops in the street and holds out his trembling hand. Though the winter passes cheerfully for those who are rejoiced by comfortable fires, it is very long, very hard for those unhappy beings who have no fuel to put on their hearths. The poor devils freeze in their garrets, shiver in the streets, in the squares, or in a niche beside some post, only too happy when a few burning bundles of straw allow them to warm their numbed limbs.

When we are resting before a sparkling fire, when we enjoy its cheerful blaze, let us think sometimes of those who have hardly any—let us help those who have none.

MONSIEUR BERTRAND'S HOUSEHOLD

MONSIEUR BERTRAND often invited me to go to dinner with him, and I had never accepted, for I am rather distrustful of these invitations which are only given in the street or when one meets at a third person's house. And then there was in M. Bertrand's appearance a carelessness which did not incline me to share his dinner; always untidy, though he wore good enough clothes; having a shirt frill covered with snuff, wearing a stained coat with new trousers, a dirty waistcoat with a white cravat. The disorder which I observed in M. Bertrand's attire seemed to me to augur ill for his household. I have generally noticed that one dines badly at the houses of people who are not careful about themselves.

I did not know M. Bertrand's family, but business lately obliged me to speak to him, so I went to his house. It was noon, I thought I should find him in, and that he would have breakfasted.

I entered the house, which was in a good neighborhood. He lived on the second floor; he must have a fine apartment. I went up, I rang, I waited a little, at length some one opened; it was a little girl of five or six years, who held a slice of bread and jam in her hand, and who opened the door without looking at me and then ran towards a little boy of seven or eight who was rummaging

in a sideboard, from which he seemed to take anything he wanted.

I looked around me for a moment, and seeing no one else, and not knowing what to do, I decided to address the children, who did not answer me.

"I should like to see M. Bertrand, if you please, mademoiselle."

"Ah, Coco, give me some cheese. I want some of it."

"Why, what a greedy thing you are! haven't you got jam?"

"All the same, I want some cheese, or else I shall tell mamma that you have taken the pie she was keeping for dinner."

"What do you think I care if you do?"

I was still there, listening to the children's dialogue, when a lady appeared, half dressed, in night-cap and dressing-jacket, holding a corset in one hand and a staylace in the other. She uttered an exclamation when she saw me.

"Good gracious! here is some one, and those children didn't tell me. Pardon me, monsieur, I thought it was the water carrier. Julie — Julie. What a state I am in! Julie, give me my gown."

"Madame, it is M. Bertrand with whom I desire to speak!"

"Yes, monsieur, you shall see him. Julie! But where can the maid be?"

"She hasn't come back from market yet, mamma."

"Good heavens! two hours to buy a fowl. It is frightful. And I have no one to dress me. Never mind, monsieur, take the trouble to pass through this room and you will find M. Bertrand."

I passed into another room, knocking my legs against furniture and dusting brushes, for the room was not yet set in order. At length I found M. Bertrand in his dressing-gown, in the midst of a pile of papers, books, cardboard boxes, engaged in sharpening his razors.

"Why, is it you, my dear fellow?" he said, coming towards me, razor in hand. "Why, it is charming of you to come and surprise us thus. You will breakfast with us, will you not?"

"What! haven't you had breakfast yet? — at noon?"

"Oh, we have no set hour, and then some days we get up late."

"I have breakfasted. I only came to get some information."

"I am at your service, will you allow me to shave?"

"Do so, I beg of you."

"Madame Bertrand, for two hours have I been asking for hot water to shave myself."

"Well, monsieur, Julie must have put some on the fire. Adele, go and see if there is any hot water for your papa."

"Yes, mamma, there was some, but my brother upset the coffee pot with his Punch."

"Oh, well, it is all right, I shall have to defer my shave till tomorrow. My dear, will you have breakfast served?"

"Why, you are in a great hurry to-day! There is nothing ready yet; Julie hasn't come back from market."

"If you will kindly give me the memorandum I asked of you," said I to M. Bertrand, who had set to work sharpening his razors again, although he was not going to shave; "it was in regard to that house for sale that you mentioned to me yesterday."

"Yes, yes; I know what you mean! Wait, the paper should be here."

M. Bertrand routed furiously in several boxes, but found nothing.

"My dear, have you not seen a paper folded in four? I think I left it on the mantelpiece the day before yesterday."

"A paper! wait a bit! Yes, I used it to light my fire. Was it anything very important?"

"Of course it was! Devil take it! they burn everything here."

"It is your fault, monsieur you should have warned me."

"Come," said I to M. Bertrand, "since the information is burned, I will not disturb you further."

"Why don't you stay to breakfast; they are going to boil some milk and I'll go and grind the coffee, it will soon be ready."

"Very much obliged, but some other time, perhaps."

"Come whenever you please, we dine at five o'clock precisely, for I like punctuality; but you know the way now, so come and we'll talk of business, I have some very good things on hand."

Making my way through a medley of chairs, playthings, and brooms, I bade good-by to M. Bertrand's household.

MEMORANDA OF AN ADONIS

I WAS sixteen years old yesterday. I am beginning to look like a man, I am already quite tall. My uncle says that I am not bad-looking, my aunt says I will be very handsome, and my aunt ought to know better than my uncle; women have more tact, they say, more shrewdness than men. My little cousin says nothing and lowers her eyes when they talk about me — I have an idea that she thinks the same as my aunt.

Yesterday my cousin gave me this set of tablets; how pretty they are, a delightful present. She could not have given me anything that would have pleased me better.

"Here," said she, when she gave them to me, "you can write your secrets on those, your thoughts."

Women understand that we have secrets then. My cousin is eighteen, she is charming. Beautiful

eyes! I dare only look at them furtively, for I tremble all over when she fixes them on me. Oh, I should like to know if my cousin has secrets, and what she would put on the tablets.

I have just written my cousin's name on them, Caroline! what a charming name! Caroline, how I love to pronounce it, to hear it. It seems to me that every woman called Caroline must be as pretty as my cousin.

If I dared to write some verses on her I have some already begun. They are much nicer than Latin verses. Next year I shall be leaving college; it seems to me I might as well leave it this year; I know enough now, but my father does not think so. If they would only let me study with my cousin. I am sure I should learn everything they wish then. When she asks me to do anything I am always so pleased. I am very fond of my aunt too; she is still very pretty. For four years I have heard her say she was thirty-six; that isn't old for a woman, but it would be quite old for a man.

Twenty years is a fine age! Oh, when only I am as old as that! People will take some notice of me then, they won't look on me as a child; I shall let my mustache grow, and when I shall give my arm to my cousin no one can look at her too closely or I shall out with my sword or fire my pistol. By the way, I mustn't forget to learn to fire a pistol.

Yesterday I passed the evening at my cousin's, we played some amusing games; I did not like them, however, for it seemed to me that I was very awkward at them.

I was seated beside my cousin, her arm was touching mine. How happy I was. But on her other side there was a gentleman who often talked with her. Caroline was laughing a good deal at something he said. I don't know why, but it made me ill to hear her laugh — it made me feel as if I would like to cry.

They asked me what I was thinking of, because I said nothing. I answered that I had a headache. I must have looked foolish. They played forfeits, and Caroline had to call some one to come and kiss her. I was trembling, I hoped it would be me, but she called the gentleman she had been laughing with. I felt my heart oppressed as though I were stifling.

I went into a corner and I played no more. She came to me, and with a charming smile she asked if I had yet written anything on my tablets. I gave them to her and I was trembling like a leaf. She saw her name written several times and she smiled; when she gave them back to me, she softly pressed my hand — I did not know where I was, I could think of nothing but that — I dreamed all night of my cousin. She had squeezed my hand. I must write that on my tablets, dear tablets! I shall always keep them.

THE FAITHFUL LOVERS

A Chronicle of the Good Old Times

THE Sire d'Apremont was possessed of an ancient castle of gothic structure flanked by towers, with bastions and fortifications, and surrounded by moats filled with water; an immense drawbridge was let down only at the sound of a horn blown by a dwarf who was constantly placed in a sentry-box on one of the turrets.

No one could penetrate easily into the castle of the Sire d'Apremont; for in those times noblemen never showed themselves except surrounded by a numerous guard; their vassals could not approach them, and even if they had been able, not one of them would have dared to do so, for each one trembled and shivered at the mere mention of their sweet master's name — and in those times the master did not hesitate to have the villains, the serfs and the varlets beaten if they ventured to raise their heads in his presence.

This Duc d'Apremont had a beautiful and gracious lady wife, but rather coquettish withal; and in those times husbands had no idea of allowing their wives to be coquettish. The fair chatelaine, forgetting to ask permission to do so, had smiled at a chevalier who had broken several lances in a tourney. The Duc d'Apremont was jealous, and in those times a jealous husband was to be feared. The latter had noticed the smile which his wife had

bestowed on the handsome chevalier, and instead of inviting the young man to come and eat his soup and conduct madame to the spectacle, as was the custom in those days, the master of the castle had shut his spouse up in a dungeon in the bottom of a tower, giving her no nourishment but bread and water, and for her only distraction the pleasure of seeing him once a day.

But in those times a wife did not laugh when she looked at her husband. The poor lady therefore found that the simplest thing she could do was to die of grief; for in those times a woman died of grief when she had smiled at any one beside her husband. History does not tell us whether it was from repentance at having smiled or sorrow because she could not smile again; this is a point which deserves to be cleared up — I recommend it to the notice of our learned and critical investigators of old chronicles.

When the Sire d'Apremont saw his wife dead he did not weep, which was very bad of him, nor did he have one of those pretty tombstones set up on which are engraved verses in honor of the defunct; but in those times, it seems, tyrants did not know how to dissimulate.

The lady left a daughter to her husband, and as the latter had come into the world a long time before the lady smiled at the chevalier of the tourney, the Sire d'Apremont was excessively fond of her; the beautiful Cunegonde was the sole object

of his care, his dearest hopes were fixed on her; which, however, did not prevent him from keeping her constantly shut up in his castle, allowing her to see no one but her duenna, not permitting her any company, nor balls, nor games, nor walks "extra muros," and not even giving her a single master. But in those times a girl was thought sufficiently educated when she knew how to hold herself straight, lower her eyes and drop a curtsey. They teach a good many other things to the young ladies nowadays.

A young page, however, who prowled around the castle managed to make Cunegonde understand that he thought her charming, and that he was burning with love for her. No doubt her eyes were not downcast when she saw the sweet glances of the page; but in those times the most innocent girls had their distractions. Besides, Cunegonde took after her mother; she was extremely sensitive.

A daughter loves to do
All that her mother did,

says a song, the refrain of which will last throughout all time. The page demanded the young girl's hand of the Sire d'Apremont, but the master of the castle had the cruelty to refuse him, under the pretext that he possessed nothing. It seems that in those times people held to the idea of money. The page, disconsolate, wished to die of love; but since love does not cause one to die quickly enough

he thought it would be much better for him to go and get killed in Palestine; for in those times a good many Christians were put out of their trouble by the Saracens, and the Christians, in their turn, sent "ad patres" a good many infidels. They did not send them all, for we meet some of them still in these days.

The page started off, then, swearing to Cunegonde, by signs from afar off, to remain faithful to her until death. His darling, who understood his signs perfectly, made him the same vows on her part, and in those times, strange to say, people kept the vows they made. See how unfortunately things turn out; hardly had the page departed when the Sire d'Apremont died, carrying to the tomb the love of his vassals and of all who had known him, even of the mistress of the castle whom he had left to die in the depths of a dungeon — at least that was what the chaplain of the castle said in his funeral oration. But in those times death turned a rascal into an honest man and made a scoundrel virtuous. Go to Père-Lachaise or to Montmartre and read the inscriptions; you will be convinced that all those who rest there were endowed with a thousand virtues, which does great honor to our times.

Here, then, was the loving Cunegonde mistress of her fate; she was very anxious to acquaint the page with this news, but the heedless fellow had not left his address; and in those times the postal

service was by no means so prompt as it is today; it was therefore necessary to wait until the crusader brought news of himself.

Cunegonde waited a year, two years, three years. In those times women had an immense amount of patience. Although a great many knights came to Cunegonde and sought to make her forget her page, they were none of them successful. In fact, not until three years had passed did the poor youth return to his country, for he had been taken prisoner by the infidels; his mistress had, however, remained free; she had guarded her heart for him, and he was not at all surprised at that, for in those times they believed in miracles.

The page was rather battered and bent, the Palestine sun had browned his skin and whitened his hair, and the infidels had broken some of his teeth. For her part, Cunegonde was not quite as fresh, as rosy, or as slender as in the old days, but she could still make a very good curtsey; and the two lovers met as fondly as if they had parted the evening before. Hurrah for the good old times!

UNDERNEATH THE TABLE

AT one of those big dinners whence cheerfulness is not banished by ceremony, where men of wit know how to sustain the conversation, where amiable and witty women give charm and life to the company, and where the mistress of the house has

the faculty of seating her guests in such a manner that each one finds himself beside some one to whom he can talk, often, I confess, I have been desirous of knowing what was transpiring underneath the table, where the conversation is sometimes very interesting and very animated.

While a rather diffuse gentleman was entangling himself in a story which gave no hope that it would ever come to an end, and which afforded no amusement to the listeners, I noticed a little lady in a pink headdress, who seemed much moved, softened, attentive; she did not breathe, she was motionless, but a gentle languor was expressed in her eyes. It was impossible that it could be the story this gentleman was relating which occupied the lady's thoughts so exclusively.

Good! here is a giddy young girl who bursts out laughing while the conversation is running on a recent calamity. This young woman, however, has not a bad heart; the desire to laugh was doubtless caused by something under the table.

This big young lady, too, she turns as red as a cherry, while the young man placed beside her offers her, with a very reserved expression, a plate filled with macaroons. Ah, mademoiselle, it is not the macaroons which give you such a beautiful color.

And this young lady who involuntarily utters an ejaculation.

"What is the matter, my dear?" inquires her

husband, who is placed at the other end of the table.

"Oh, nothing," answers the lady, glancing at a gentleman who is seated beside her, "merely a pain in my teeth, which came on suddenly. It is passing away now."

But the dessert has arrived; the champagne sparkles and foams, the glasses are emptied, heads grow light and eyes animated, everybody speaks at once; this is the moment when one may, without fear of being overheard, say many things to his fair neighbor; and this also is the moment when it should be interesting underneath the table.

As I am rather curious, and as besides I like to satisfy myself about things, I managed to drop my snuffbox; I stooped to look for it, and at the same time I cast an observing glance about me. All the feet were not in their places; that of the pretty lady in the pink headdress was under that of a young officer of hussars; the knee of the young author was quite close to that of the big young lady who colors and lowers her eyes every time any one speaks to her. The hand of a plain artist is lightly pressed by that of a marquise in the decline of life; while that rich stockbroker, under pretense of playing with his napkin, slips a billet-doux on to his neighbor's knee, she does not let it fall either.

But come, what do I see down here? Two enormous feet, one on the other; surely there is some mistake here! Let's examine the position of the

owners; these two feet belong, one to a big Englishman and the other to a rich old fellow, a great admirer of the fair sex. Between these two gentlemen is seated a young girl of sixteen, very pretty and fresh-looking, but very awkward and simple. During the whole meal, the poor little thing has been the target for the oglings and sighs and gallantries of her two neighbors. She has kept her eyes lowered and her feet drawn back under her chair, but these gentlemen have each put a leg out, and the big Englishman's foot has been supported on that of the old flirt. Each of these gentlemen is delighted because he thinks he has obtained a tender favor; and the heavier the Englishman bears, the more highly pleased is the old rake, and the sighings and oglings begin again.

But I must get up, I have been quite long enough looking for my snuffbox, and there is nothing more to see; for in bumping my head rather hard against a leg of the table I have sent all the feet to their proper places.

POTLUCK

"COME and share my dinner," a gentleman whom I hardly knew, and did not desire to know any further, often said to me. "You will see my family, my wife and my children; you will be received without fuss or ceremony; you'll have potluck, but you will give us all a great deal of

pleasure." It is only to an intimate friend that one should ever venture to offer potluck; but friends are so rare, and good dinners so common, that it would be very agreeable to share this luck, if one were sure of being surrounded only by good people, true friends, who welcome you just for the pleasure of seeing you, and not for some interested motive, which is often the real incentive of an invitation.

With an old college chum whom changes of fortune have not made one's enemy or who is not envious of our good fortune, beside the young mother of a family, who is amiable without pretension, beautiful but not coquettish, the most simple dinner would really be good luck.

I have always eluded the invitations of this friend whom I do not know, but yesterday I met him towards five o'clock in the evening. He came hurriedly towards me, seized me by the arm, and stopped me.

"Where are you going?" cried he.

"To dinner," I answered him, without thinking.

"To dinner? oh, now I have you! you must come to dinner with me."

In vain I offered the pretext of a previous invitation; my man would not let me off. Longer resistance would have been ridiculous. I yielded with the best grace I could muster, muttering to myself,—

"Perhaps I shall be agreeably surprised; this

gentleman is a mere twaddler, but his wife may be amiable, his children well-bred, and his cooking good."

We arrived at my host's house. We went up to the third floor. Before reaching the door I heard the shouts of several children who seemed to be fighting and crying.

"Ah," said my companion, "my little rascals are hungry; they are expecting me impatiently."

I said to myself, "If the 'little rascals' carry on like this all through dinner, that will indeed be very interesting."

We rang; a tall, thin, yellow-complexioned woman opened the door, and made an involuntary motion of surprise when she saw me.

"My dearest," said my host, "I have brought Monsieur ——, of whom I have often spoken; he's come to dine with us — unceremoniously."

The tall lady's face, already long enough, lengthened still further at her husband's speech, and she greeted me with a convulsion of the countenance which I might have taken for a grimace, but which was doubtless intended for a smile. There is nothing more disagreeable than to witness the embarrassment of those people to whose house one goes against his will. I should have liked to be a hundred miles away; but my friend — whom I do not know — pushed me into another room that I might admire the convenience of his dwelling and that I might not hear his wife grumble.

I had a good deal of trouble in getting into this other room, for the "little rascals" had turned it upside down. The floor was covered with play-things, papers, images, dolls' houses; there was not a chair free from incumbrance.

"What happiness to be the father of a family," said my host trying to find me a seat.

"Yes," answered I, "it must be delightful, according to what I see."

"Hello, Alcide! Achille, come here, messieurs."

"What do you want, papa?"

"Come here, I say."

The little boys did not come. The papa went to take them by the ear, saying,—

"They are very obedient. Well, now, Alcide, did you learn your lesson properly. Let's hear your fable."

"The ant having sung all summer, held a piece of cheese in his beak—"

"That's very well," answered the papa, "now, Achille, it's your turn. He's a joker is that little fellow — What is the most wonderful thing in the world?"

"A pie," answered the little one, decidedly.

"Come, now, you didn't expect such an answer as that. He's deuced sharp—I shall put him in the post-office."

Finally the tall lady called to us that dinner was ready.

"Come, we'll go to the table," said my host, and

he made me sit between himself and M. Alcide, because madame was obliged to get up every minute to serve us, her maid being quite ill; we know what that means.

"If my husband had let me know in time," said the lady with a semi-agreeable expression, "I should have cooked something for monsieur, but he's incessantly playing me such tricks."

"Madame," said I, "I should have been very sorry to have caused you any trouble."

"Of course; my friend came without ceremony. Potluck and a picture of domestic happiness, that is all he will have."

The picture of domestic happiness was composed of some bad soup-maigre, flanked by radishes and Brittany butter; and to add to my satisfaction M. Alcide kept throwing pellets of bread into my plate and M. Achille was kicking me under the table.

"Have something to drink," said my host, "it is home-made wine."

Alas! I had already perceived that to my sorrow. What home-made wine, good Lord! It would have made Panurge's sheep scour the woods again. After the soup came a piece of beef, warmed over, and in which I looked in vain for a morsel of fat. I was obliged, however, to accept a piece, which I should have liked to keep to sole my boots. After the beef the lady of the house proudly presented a great dish in which I saw nothing but

sauce. At sight of this, the "little rascals," who probably saw nothing but beef soup ordinarily, set to work throwing their forks in the air; one of them struck my nose and my cravat bore the marks of it.

"You must let me know what you think of this fricassee of fowl," said my neighbor as he served me. "My wife cooks it deliciously."

It was fortunate that he told me it was fowl, for finding nothing but claws and onions I should have been puzzled to know what I was eating. But M. Alcide, in trying to throw a little bone at his brother, overturned a water-bottle, which rolled off the table and broke on my breeches. The mamma, instead of troubling about me, thought only of the loss of her water-bottle. She ran at the little fellows to beat them; the two children ran and hid behind a door, where their mamma pursued them with a cane; papa rose to restrain his wife, and I alone remained at the table, wishing that I could escape also.

Finally my friend came back to me and said,—

"Do you take coffee sometimes? There is none ready, but I have a coffee-pot in which it can be made without boiling, and with warm water."

"Thank you," said I, "I never take it; besides, I have already dined only too well — I need a little constitutional, and I really must leave you."

"Good-by for the present then; now that you know the way I hope you will sometimes come and take potluck with us."

"Yes, certainly; I know the way now and I shan't forget to come, nor the picture of domestic happiness that you have allowed me to witness."

I took my hat and went on my way again.

A BACHELOR'S THOUGHTS ON MARRIAGE

IF I were married I would give up all those extravagant habits to which a bachelor gives way every day of his life; those foolish expenses which often have the saddest results, those restaurant parties which fatigue the body and deaden the mind, and those acquaintances who make one laugh in the evening, but whom one doesn't care to meet in the morning.

If I were married I should want to love my wife, for I think it must be continual torture to live with a person whom one does not love. I know well there are many households where the husband and wife hardly see each other for an hour a day; but it seems to me it must be much nicer to seek one's wife than it is to avoid her.

If I were married I should not care for my wife's face, her mind, her manners, nor her dress, to be commented on; however, I should wish her to be irreproachable on all those points.

If I were married people would not be incessantly meeting me alone at the theatre or on the promenades. I should not fear to be seen with my

wife on my arm, I should still less fear the ridicule which fatuous and foolish men like to cast on attentive husbands; three parts of these resemble the fox in the fable, they could not attain happiness themselves, and so they try to revenge themselves by sneering at happy people.

If I were married I should like to have a numerous family of children, for children are the links in the chain of love that binds husband and wife.

If I were married I should like to have a private room in which I might work quietly; but I should not wish to occupy it for the whole twenty-four hours.

If I were married I would no longer run after all the women, because I should have no desire to love any one but my wife; but I should try to be amiable to the others, in order to make them envious of her happiness. I shall be gallant towards beauty, and I shall seek the society of a sex which I shall always love, and my wife will not be vexed thereat; because, in plucking one flower one is not debarred from breathing the perfume of others.

If I were married I should not be jealous, for jealousy causes ill-temper, and ill-temper puts love to flight; nor shall I be too confiding, for a woman often takes a man's confidence in her as a mark of his indifference, and perhaps she is not altogether wrong.

If I were married I should like to feel a sub-

stantial friendship for my wife, for friendship survives love. I should also wish her to possess some talent, that she should like reading and music, for a woman who loves the arts has resources in herself and is never lonely, and as a husband is obliged to absent himself sometimes, if a wife is lonely it is always to be feared that she will lend an ear to the distractions which are offered her.

If I were married I should not like my wife to have an intimate female friend with whom she would be more often than with her husband, and to whom I should have to pay little attentions so as not to be sulked at by my wife.

If I were married I should be very careful indeed whom I received into my house; I should very soon dispense with the visits of those gentlemen who always come when the husband is out. I should never let my wife go out with any man but myself; I would not have those obliging friends who are always ready to offer their arms, and who have their pockets full of theatre tickets, for I should remember everything that I myself had done as a bachelor.

AN UNLUCKY DAY

THERE are days when everything seems to smile on us, when with a sane mind and a light heart we see life through rose-colored spectacles, and this happy temper has an influence on all our actions throughout the day. Everything we do pleases us, we see only amiable people, we meet only pretty women, we neither hear nor read nor say stupid things during the whole course of the day; that is to say, a happy disposition and a good digestion have made us see the best side of everything.

But there are also some days when a secret ill-luck seems to follow us. I was probably under this malign influence yesterday.

I awoke with a heavy head, I was sad without knowing why. I laid it first of all to the weather, which was frightful; but yet in weather much worse than this I had often laughed with my friends or sung under my sweetheart's window, and then I disturbed myself very little about wind and weather.

I rose; it was impossible to find my slippers, they were too far under my bed. I called Dumont, my old servant, he did not come; where the devil was he? Gossiping with the porter, no doubt. I went up to a glass; by Jove! how yellow and heavy-eyed I was. That was not at all a good sign.

At length Dumont arrived, he gave me a newspaper, assuring me it was but eight o'clock and that my watch was fast. Well, let's see the news while they are getting my breakfast ready.

"What the devil did you bring this up to me for, Dumont? the 'Petites Affiches,' that's not my journal, you know well that I read the 'Pandore.'"

"Hang it, monsieur, the porter must have been mistaken, he gave the other to that actress's maid, the one who lives on your floor."

"Go quickly and get it."

Dumont went and presently returned quite scared.

"You won't get your paper this morning, monsieur; it seems that it says your neighbor wasn't good in the new play and the lady was so angry that she tore the paper up and threw it in the fire."

"That's very pleasant for me. My breakfast, quick! that I may go out, I have an appointment on important business."

Just as I am sitting down to the table somebody rings at my door; a gentleman who comes from the provinces, and whom I know very slightly, but who, finding himself in Paris, imagines that he owes me a visit. This man is the most talkative of his species in the world. He tells me everything he has done in a certain neighborhood; he informs me that he has bought a house, a farm, some rabbits, some turkeys. And what had all that to do with me. I let him understand that I had

business, that I was pressed for time, he led me into his garden, his pigeon house, his stable; he did not spare me a lettuce. It was noon before he remembered that he had business for ten o'clock. He took his leave of me at length and I consigned him to Dumont.

My first appointment was missed. I dressed myself to call upon a pretty woman; I went out and I had not taken ten steps when a cursed cabriolet covered me with mud from head to foot; I went back home to change my clothing. Here was another mishap, Dumont had gone out and I had not a key; quick to a locksmith's, I absolutely must get my door opened. My porter went off, and at the expiration of three-quarters of an hour, which I passed on the landing, he brought me a drunkard who could hardly hold himself up and who wanted, like M. Clainville in the "Gageure imprévue," to tell me the name of all the objects of which a lock is composed.

"My dear fellow, I am sure you are very expert, but for heaven's sake open my door; that is the best way to prove your skill."

"Yes, yes, monsieur. Then there is a hook which will turn the bolt."

"Well, turn the bolt, then, instead of keeping me here."

The knave tried ten or a dozen hooks, he passed an hour at my lock and ended by telling me he must go and get some other tools. I was at a

pretty pass, for the drunkard was not likely to come back. But Dumont came in just as I was about to break in the door. I dressed again, and went out, taking a key this time. I took a cab and reached my pretty woman's, finding her surrounded with aunts and cousins.

"I have been alone all the morning," she whispered to me; "I was expecting you."

This avowal filled me with despair. I left her. I was expected to dine at a rich banker's.

"Come now," said he when I arrived, "you must make some verses. I have a young man to dinner who has just composed a little poem on the pleasures of country life, which he assures me treats of it quite differently from Vergil and Delille. As for that I am going to put him beside you, and during dinner he will let you hear a few passages."

Alas, it was but too true, I was beside a tender nursling of the muses, who could not pass me mushrooms or anchovies without accompanying them with lines from his poem. If I had at least had some one on the other side to indemnify me! But no, it was an aunt of the poet, who when he had done would whisper to me,—

"What talent, monsieur! what a misfortune it would have been had that man not written."

At last the dinner was ended, but that confounded poet pursued me like my shadow. I sat down to écarté to avoid him, but my side was

unfortunate, I lost fifteen louis to a woman who looked sour even when she won. I was going to take my leave. I felt myself held by the arm. "Will you be kind enough to see my aunt home," said my banker to me; "her son could not come to take her, but she doesn't live very far from here." So I installed her in a cab and all the way along I had to hear her bewail the loss of a dozen fishes at boston, while missing a most magnificent chance.

At last she was at home and I presently reached my own abode. I went to bed cursing my day, and the vexations I had experienced gave me a nightmare all night.

LITTLE BY LITTLE

LITTLE by little, according to the old adage, one comes to the end of everything. As time passes, in fact, we shall see a good many things happen, but not always such as we should desire.

Little by little the child grows, his mind is formed, and passions take the place of the play of his early infancy; presently ambition and the desire to get on drive away the illusions of youth; then cares and troubles usurp the place of pleasures; then white hairs, which increase the distance from love but do not always induce wisdom; then infirmities, old age which has nothing but memories; then finally death, which is ever looming in the distance;

all this happens little by little, but all is interwoven, nevertheless.

It is little by little that an honest and industrious man enriches himself; he does not indulge in risky speculations which might ruin his principles, but he reaches an easy competence, and the fortune acquired little by little has always a firmer basis than that which grows by chance.

Little by little, on the other hand, the man who does foolish things sees his fortune disappear; little by little the man who ruins himself sees his friends leave him, and those upon whom he has conferred benefits shun him.

Little by little evil connections corrupt those natures which were naturally good, just as the habit of excess at the table will undermine the most robust health. Little by little weakness leads to vice when one keeps bad company. A person adopts the manners and habits of those with whom he associates; and, having blamed them, you end in imitating them. If you see a rascal, little by little his sophistry seduces you, his example leads you astray, you laugh at what would formerly have made you blush, and you glide towards an abyss which little by little will swallow you up.

It is often little by little that love snares a heart which has sworn to resist him. Young girls, a skilful lover will employ means to overcome your indifference. Tender glances, sweet words, slight pressures of the hand, protestations, avowals of

fidelity, he will put all these in use to vanquish you. If you resist these he will change his tactics, he will become sad, melancholy, he will pretend to stifle his sighs. You think you will pay no attention to it, but little by little you are interested and become in your turn dreamy, pensive, and uneasy; you begin to sigh in secret, and your lover will then become less timid. Little by little he will obtain a slight favor, then a confession, then a kiss, then your heart, which he will wholly gain, although you only let him take it little by little.

We cannot guard against events which happen suddenly, in the course of life one cannot foresee the revolutions which are forming little by little; let us use pleasure sparingly, if we do not wish to ruin our health; accord our friendship only little by little in order that we may be less often deceived; and, in love, give the preference to that happiness which we have obtained only little by little.

THE MAN WHO WAS MASTER IN HIS OWN HOUSE

MY friend Dupont, who is one of the best of men, is always repeating (not before his wife, you may be sure),—

"I am master of my own house, nothing is done there except by my order; when I have decided

upon anything it has to be so. I have a mind of my own and stick to what I say; Madame Dupont does not lead me, she does all that I wish and opposes me in nothing."

Generally speaking, I have noticed that it is well to mistrust the firmness of those people who talk very loudly about their strength of mind; they resemble those brave men who have never put their swords to the proof, those cowards who sing when they are afraid, those fatuous fellows who are always boasting of their success with the ladies and whom one never meets with any but saucy little monkey faces; the man who is really master in his own house proves it by his conduct and not by his speeches.

My poor Dupont, all your firmness is of no avail against a glance from madame your wife; before her you are like a scholar before his preceptor, like one who solicits a favor before a man in power; but one could forgive your pusillanimity if you did not, directly you are out of her sight, begin to shout with your nose in the air, "I am master in my own house!"

One day Dupont received an invitation to go to the wedding of one of his friends, but they did not invite madame, and she said very dryly to her spouse,—

"You will not go to that wedding."

"I shall go, madame," said Dupont, "that is one of the friends of my infancy; he does not

know you, and he could not well invite you; but it will make him very unhappy if I fail him."

Dupont invited me to call for him at five o'clock precisely, that we might go together to the restaurant where they were having the wedding festival. I suspected that my errand would be fruitless; however, I was at Dupont's at the hour appointed, and though he ought to have been ready he received me in his trousers and dressing-gown.

"What!" said I, "aren't you dressed yet?"

"My dear fellow," he answered, ferreting in all the corners, "my wife has gone out and by mistake she has taken the key of my room, and I can't dress myself until she comes back. Wait a bit! I'm sure she'll be back immediately, she knows I am not dressed."

I departed in spite of Dupont's entreaties, his wife did not get back until eleven o'clock, leaving her husband to pass his evening walking about in his slippers and dressing-gown while they were expecting him at the wedding.

Dupont was desirous of buying a house in the country; he came to get me to go with him to see a pretty property which he was very much inclined to become possessed of. We admired the house, which was very nice.

"Does your wife know about it?" said I to Dupont.

"No, but it is all the same; what pleases me is sure to please her. Besides, am I not the master!"

And the dear man continued to look around, saying as he did so,—

"I shall have this built there — I shall have that built there, it will be charming, delightful!"

I laughed at Dupont's plans, and he invited me to dine with him on the following day.

"You will praise this house before my wife," he said to me, "and that will give her a desire to have it; not that I need her permission, but that can't but do good."

But Madame Dupont was too clever not to divine her husband's plans. To invite me to dinner without consulting his wife was a little liberty she did not allow Dupont.

In fact, the next morning I received a letter from madame which informed me that, her cook being ill, she could not have the pleasure of giving me dinner.

Since that time Dupont has never again mentioned the house in the country, but he still asserts, "I am master in my own house."

MOVING DAY

I HAD a few days ago some business matters to finish in different parts of Paris; I settled in my mind the order in which I would employ my day, hoping it would suffice for all my errands; and after breakfasting I set out at nine o'clock in the morning.

Hardly had I put my foot on my staircase when I was stopped by a porter who was taking down an old commode, which filled up the whole width of my staircase; so I had to wait till he reached the bottom of the stairs, which he was some time in doing, for the piece of furniture was very heavy. At last I was in the alleyway and by Jove! I was caught between two sack-bottomed beds and some piles of chairs. How the devil was I going to get through all that? I ventured, however, and putting one foot on a foot-warmer and the other on a stove I managed to reach the street, where I was still further stopped by the wagon on which they were loading the furniture and which made me lose at least ten minutes.

"Deuce take it!" said I, hastening my steps; "I must regain the time lost if I'm to do all that I have to." I started off and soon reached the Rue des Gravilliers, my first stopping-place; but in looking at my feet I failed to see two men who were coming towards me with a handbarrow loaded with furniture; I almost fell over the handbarrow. The porters stopped and swore after me. I had, they said, knocked a piece off the corner of a fine gilt frame; they would be made to pay for this damage and I must pay them.

I wanted to send the porters and their frame walking, but I was surrounded by working-men and they would not allow that I was in the right. After listening to some tall talk I had to pay and

felt that I had better have done so in the first place. I gave them a twenty-sous piece, they let me go my way, and this time I looked carefully before me.

A few steps further on I saw two women in front of me carrying on their backs pitchers, brooms, saucepans, and other household utensils. As the street was narrow and they were walking side by side, each one holding by the hand a string of children, I was obliged to walk slowly behind these interesting families for five minutes; and every time I saw a little gap by which I thought I could slip through, the handles of the brooms or those of the saucepans barred my passage.

Finally the two families turned off into a street on the left, leaving me free to move on. But no, some men were disputing in the street, they were two men with handcarts, who had got their wheels locked and were reciprocally accusing each other of awkwardness; from swearing they came to blows. The crowd closed in behind and I felt myself pushed into an alley by a little woman who cried to me,—

"Oh, monsieur, I can't bear to see two men fighting, it makes me ill. Oh, the unfortunate men, how they are hitting each other — and there's one of them on the ground! Good heavens, it's frightful. Why doesn't somebody separate them? Oh, one of them has his nose all cut? I shall be ill!"

"Hang it, madame! don't look at them," said I to the curious woman, pushing her aside that I might stand in front of her.

"How brusque some men are — they have no refinement!" she exclaimed darting angry glances at me. But I left her, and pushing through the crowd managed at last to cross over to the other side and reach the house where I had business.

"Confound it! I didn't get here without some trouble," I said to myself as I went towards the staircase, for the porter had assured me that the person I was asking for was at home. I was in a hurry, but hardly had I put my foot on the tenth step when I was stopped by two men who were carrying up an immense sideboard. Alas! had they only been coming down, but they were going up to the fifth story and my friend lived on that floor and they were stopping on every step to take breath.

As for me, I consulted my watch. I had been out for two hours and I had not yet accomplished a single errand. I made up mind, I went down the stairs and decided to go home. My business had to wait for some other time, I had to give up the idea of going about in Paris between the eighth and the fifteenth of every term.

THE DINING-ROOM OF A RESTAURANT

THERE are few places that present a vaster field of observation for the curious than the public dining-room of a famous restaurant in Paris. Here are met together men from divers countries and of different occupations, whom Comus attracts into one of his temples for from five to six hours. Provided that your purse be well-filled, you may, simple countryman or modest shopkeeper though you be, share the same cooking as the great capitalist, the brilliant stock-jobber, or the fashionable author.

This call of the stomach brings men together and eliminates distinctions. Everybody has to eat, it is necessary to great and to small. Dame Nature in her wisdom has given the same needs to rich and poor, to noble and peasant, it is man who has created ranks, prerogatives, distinctions; but up to the present they have not been able to regulate the functions of the stomach nor cause the chief of a division to digest differently from a modest copying clerk.

When I go alone to a restaurant, I establish myself in a dining-room, and there, after scanning the bill of fare, I amuse myself by looking at the people who are seated about me. I form my conjectures as to who and what they are from the manner in which they conduct themselves at the table,

and often by their taste in the way of food. I put my observations together, and it is rarely that one of my neighbors has finished his dinner before I am able to say what his fortune and occupation are. Certainly, as the bailiff of Rossignol says, "It is a very innocent pleasure."

Yesterday I obtained that pleasure. At five o'clock I went into the dining-room of one of our best restaurants. It was crowded, but I found an unoccupied place at a table, thanks to a waiter who is a protégé of mine; it is well to have friends everywhere.

After looking at my bill of fare I glanced around me. On my right were seated two young men, on my left a lady and gentleman, opposite a middle-aged man with a tall young man, both of whom had provincial dress and manners; a little farther off a stout gentleman with a rubicund face and beside him a serious personage who wore a decoration. I confined my observation to this little circle; my young neighbors on the right made a good deal of noise, they spoke loud, gesticulated, guyed the waiter, and seemed to be in a very hilarious mood; they took oysters first, then madeira. They consulted the bill of fare to look for the best dishes, but they did not look at the column of prices. At first I imagined they were two playwrights who had made a hit the night before, or who expected to make one tonight, but presently some phrases that I heard made me change my opinion.

"I was sure I should sell again at a profit.—Some turbot, waiter!"

"You've had a lucky vein for some days past. Some oil, waiter!"

"I had betted on its rising. I am never mistaken. Change the wine."

"And that other operation, by which I immediately gained seven hundred and twenty francs over and above the price, that wasn't so bad! We must allow ourselves some Chambertin."

"That young heir wants a thousand crowns at the end of the present month. Apple charlotte with preserves."

"I have a splendid thing in view — some jars of cream. I must be bold. Bring some chocolate, waiter!"

I know enough about them; these gentlemen do business on 'Change, they are right to deny themselves nothing for today, for who knows if they will have the means to dine at all tomorrow. Let's see on the left.

The gentleman is very attractive, the lady very affected and full of airs; she hardly answers him, she will not even deign to say what she would like; he consults her about each dish and she answers disdainfully,—

"What does it matter to me? I'm not hungry."

She finds everything detestable, ill-served, the accommodation bad; however, she eats enough for four.

Poor young man, I cannot felicitate you on your conquest. Although your lady puts on the airs of a princess, and despite her grave expression and her affectation of prudery, which contrasts strongly with the glances she casts at her neighbors, I fear indeed that you have fallen into the toils of an adventuress who, seeing that she has to do with a novice, wants to make him pay dearly for the slightest favors. She would not accept a dinner in a private room ; she wants to play the virtuous, but that doesn't deceive a man who knows the world. Every word this woman utters betrays her origin and her habitual associates. Her manners show through the restraint she imposes upon herself to assume the bearing of a respectable woman. Let us listen for a moment to their conversation.

"Will you order something, my dearest?"

"Good Heavens! no. What does it matter to me what we have? I haven't the slightest appetite."

"Don't you think this is good."

"What are you thinking of? it is detestable, horrid. How dare they serve things like this? It isn't fresh."

"Waiter, madame says your fish is not fresh."

"No one else has complained of it, monsieur."

"Well, they must have famous palates to think this good. Ask for some quail on toast," said the lady.

"Waiter, some quail on toast."

"Oh, ask for a small partridge too, I think I could eat some."

"Waiter, a partridge!"

"It seems to me I could drink a little drop of champagne — good heavens, how badly one dines at these restaurants."

Poor young man, your small fortune will hardly suffice for the pace at which this woman will lead you.

"Come, waiter, serve me at once, I've been asking for roast beef, beefsteak, plum-pudding, brandy."

"In a minute, monsieur."

"By Jove, I'm in a hurry for my dinner — potatoes and dry sherry."

While this gentleman, whom from his language and tastes I perceived to be a neighbor from across the sea, threw himself upon his bleeding beef, I looked at the grave gentleman who was seated beside him. The latter acted methodically; he appeared to reflect on the quality and virtue of each particular dish, and weighed the reasons for or against them before ordering. It will astonish me greatly if this gentleman does not turn out to be in diplomacy. I am sure that he sees what grave consequences will result should he order one dish before another; he sees politics in turkey and dissimulation in a rice soufflé. How he calculates the order and the price of his dinner, what a noble bearing, what a proud face as he carves or pours

out his wine. I don't know if he is playing with his food, or if he has an appetite, for he does everything so formally, and it would be impossible for him to hold his knife and fork in a more distinguished manner.

Let us turn now toward these two people who are seated at the table at the side; I will wager they are father and son, uncle or nephew; there is a family resemblance between them. Surely these men don't belong to Paris; even if their dress did not show me that, their conduct in this room would suffice to convince me. The two have seated themselves at a table, they dare not turn round nor raise their heads, nor use their handkerchiefs, nor clear their throats; and they are still more afraid to eat. For an hour they have been holding the bill of fare and passing and repassing it between them without ordering anything.

At last they have settled upon something; but they don't know how to get served. The elder one calls in a half whisper,—

"Monsieur — say monsieur, say master!"

The waiter does not answer and the younger man pulls his napkin as he is passing.

"Some vermicelli soup, if you please, monsieur."

"For two?"

"Why of course, are there not two of us? Does he suppose one of us is going to watch the other eat?"

After the soup they take as much time to see

what else they shall take, and later on go through the same ceremony with the waiter. I am really sorry for these countrymen, who at this rate will not have done their dinner before ten o'clock in the evening. But they have brought my omelette soufflé and the dish has struck admiration into the hearts of the two provincials; they follow the waiter with their eyes and this time do not let him escape them.

"Give us some of that," said the younger, designating the dish that is before me.

"Some omelette soufflé?"

"Yes, some of that over there with sugar on it."

"For how many?"

"Two dishes for each of us."

The unlucky men! what will they do with it? I have a great mind to tell them it is too much. But the waiter is already some distance off. 'Faith, let them get out of it as best they can! My young neighbors on the right have gone to the Bouffes; the lady and gentleman have started for the Opéra; the reflective man is taking his coffee; the Englishman is just going to have some punch; as for me, I am going to take the air, and I leave the salon just as they are placing before the two countrymen a dish of omelette soufflé which would suffice for a dozen people.

FORTUNATE CREDULITY

IS one fortunate in believing in the sincerity of his friends? in the constancy of his mistress? in the good faith of his tradespeople? in the fidelity of his servants? Or is he more fortunate in that he is doubtful of everyone? suspicious of all those who surround him? and constantly looking out for treachery and perfidy? Who, like me, does not believe that it is better to be confiding than suspicious at the risk of sometimes, often perhaps, being deceived? For the more one seeks to know the truth, to read men's hearts, the more one loses illusions and chimeras; illusions make people happy, experience makes them suspicious; therefore it is well to be credulous, one has everything to gain by it.

As for me, I am, I must confess, the most credulous man in all Paris; whether it be of set purpose or from taste, I believe in everything and in everybody, and I venture to think I do well in so doing.

For me the future is always rose-colored. Fifty years have I lived and I firmly believe I shall live as many more.

My credulity has, however, played me some bad tricks. The son of rich parents, I was left an orphan at eighteen. They gave as guardian a former solicitor, a Norman. He told me incessantly that he wished nothing but my good, that

he was busied with my interests, and I did not doubt his good faith. He had engaged me in a dozen lawsuits, upon what grounds I know not. I won them all, but each time that I did so I found my capital depleted fifteen to twenty thousand francs: so that after winning a dozen I found myself reduced to a hundred louis income, six months after my parents had left me; but my guardian assured me that I had ruined my adversaries. I believed him and thought myself very fortunate to have kept something.

I went into society. I made acquaintances there, — friends. Friendship is induced so quickly between young men and all who were about me evinced a very tender degree of it for me. They borrowed money of me, dipping into my purse as though it was that of a brother. How happy I was at being in the midst of such devoted friends, for they repeatedly said to me,—

"You will oblige us to-day, we will oblige you tomorrow." In truth, I soon saw the end of my hundred louis of income, and when I wanted to dip into their purses I found nothing there; but they showed so much regret at being unable to oblige me that I was moved to tears.

Having obtained a place by the intervention of an amiable woman, who swore to me that I owed it only to my abilities, I was not long before I was married. What a woman I became possessed of! She had all the talents, or so her mother

said when she gave her to me, and certainly I did not doubt it.

From the very first she wanted to keep the purse, but that was through her sense of order. She did not allow me to spend a sou without her permission, but that was through economy; she spent a good deal on her dress, but that was to please me; she went to balls without me, but that was to spare my health; she was always accompanied by one of her cousins, but that was that I might be sure she did not go with others; in fact, at the end of six and a half months of marriage she presented me with a pretty little boy, but that was customary in her family, though it never happened except with the first child.

How happy I was with my loving wife! She died, leaving me seven charming children, my daughters wish to do nothing, my boys will do only what they feel inclined to, but I am sure they will all make their way.

Fortunate credulity! remain with me till I reach the grave; when I was a child I believed in my nurse's tales, my governess's stories; later on I believed in the vows of my friends and my wife; now I believe my son's protestations, the reserved modesty of my daughters, in my housekeeper's dreams, and in the wonders I read of in the newspapers.

Is there a man more fortunate than I?

THE TWO FUNERALS

ONE has one's happy days; I include in that order those upon which I meet on my way, pretty women of gracious bearing, with tiny feet and well-turned ankles; such things as these immediately put me in a good-humor. Nothing evokes the imagination like a pair of fine eyes. The sight of a seductive woman is not quickly effaced from my memory, and my thoughts remained tinged with rose-color throughout the whole day.

But there are some days when one may traverse all the neighborhoods of Paris without meeting a pretty saucy little face; certainly there are some ugly phizzes which belong to very amiable people; but we are only big children, and we are attracted first by that which appeals to the eye. Some days ago I did not see everything in rose-color, for, as I made my peregrinations, I was stopped on my way by two funerals.

The first was very fine; rich hangings, silver tears, prancing horses, coachmen with cuffs and shirt frills and weepers, a good many mourning coaches followed by some private carriages; the procession was very long, and there were on foot only some of the servants of the deceased and some poor people carrying torches.

"This dead man was a person of consideration in his life," said I to myself, "he had a carriage and a number of servants, a hotel, no doubt, and

perhaps a fine house in the country; he went into the best society, to which he must have added a charm, especially if he gave dinners and had a good cook. Everybody would feel honored by his acquaintance, he must have had a crowd of friends."

Riches are a fine thing. One can philosophize finely upon them. The rich man, even after death, can still cut a good figure, and the last journey is surrounded with the honors which have embellished his existence.

After ascertaining the name of the deceased, I pursued my way and a little farther on I was again stopped by a funeral; this one was more modest than the first; a very simple hearse, no weepers on the coachman, not a single mourning coach; but instead more than two hundred persons on foot following the hearse. I did not see, among all those people, any fashionable or fine clothes; but I saw faces which indicated honesty, kindness, and above all, sorrow.

"Who was the defunct?" I demanded of an old woman who had bowed to some one in the funeral train.

"He was a master mason," she answered, "an honest man, beloved by his children and his workmen; no one knew till after his death all the good he had done during his life."

"That is a good hearing," said I to myself as I went on; but this funeral had not the pomp, the magnificence of the first. Besides the rich man

may also have been beloved by those who knew him—and the torches, the coaches, the silver tears —all those were very fine indeed.

Some days after this I took a fancy to go to the cemetery of Père-Lachaise. As I walked among the graves I perceived a fine mausoleum, on which I read the name of the deceased. It was that of the rich man whose funeral I had met; his last shelter had been made magnificent, and below his name I read a long eulogy on his virtues, his good qualities in Alexandrine verse, followed by the regrets of his children and of all his family in lines of eight feet.

After admiring this monument I walked through other paths; I had gone some distance when I saw several young men assembled around a tomb. I advanced softly, in order that I might not disturb them; the mausoleum was very simple and I read on the stone the name of the master mason whose funeral I had also met. His name only was there; but before the tombstone I saw three young men on their knees, his sons no doubt, who, with eyes filled with tears were scattering flowers on the tomb.

My heart constricted; I felt that this homage was preferable to all the pomp and grandeur of the other. I departed slowly; and as I repassed the fine mausoleum, I glanced but coldly at the magnificent monument, before which the curious only stopped.

THE HABITUES OF THE ORCHESTRA

I LIKE to go to the play; moreover, I like to have a good place. Before going to a theatre I set about inquiring where one can best see and hear. I insist upon the former point, for I like to enjoy the changing expression of an actor and the gracious smile of a dancer.

I have been to all the Parisian theatres, and I must confess there are very few where I have found a really good place. To see and hear, some tell me, there is no better place than the parquet; but I was quickly obliged to leave it. At the smaller theatres the society in the parquet is not always choice; besides, it is too noisy; and as I like to hear the play I am impatient when conversations are going on around me. One always has an officious neighbor who relates in advance, to all those persons who are unfortunate enough to be near her, all that is going to take place in each scene; often she anticipates the actors or repeats portions of their speeches with them, to say nothing of the interminable commentaries, the sententious reflections, which follow the slightest incident with wearisome inconsistency.

At the larger theatres the parquet is usually occupied by people of a better class, but it is anything but quiet; quarrels often arise between those who wish to hiss and those who wish to applaud,

and despite one's neutrality one always receives one's share of the battle.

Going rather to the large than the small theatres, I first give the balcony the preference. The society there is choice; but—would you believe it? —people talk nearly as much there as they do in the parquets at the smaller theatres. Certainly the conversations one hears do not grate on the ear; these are almost always people of good form who express themselves with taste and elegance of diction, and who are often witty as well. In spite of that, as I come to see the play and hear the music, I am often vexed by the recital of the successes of this one or the conquests of that other, the fluctuations of the Bourse, the losses of M—— at écarté, Madame D——'s last ball, and a thousand other pretty things which come to me from right and left, and do not give my poor ears a moment's respite, a chance to hear the play.

Lately at the first representation of a new play I tried the orchestra, in the hope that I might better enjoy the play. Alas! I fell out of Scylla into Charybdis.

In the orchestra are placed those who are called habitues, men who have their passes and who go every evening to the theatre just exactly as a supernumerary goes every morning to his office. I found myself between two habitues, for the greater part of these gentlemen are well known. They dragged the new piece on to the carpet, and before

the curtain rose I learned that it was a detestable piece; words and music were both as bad as they could be.

"By Jove," said I to myself, "I did very wrong to come here this evening. These gentlemen will pass the actors and actresses in review later on." I learned all the anecdotes of the wings; and in a quarter of an hour I had heard of fifteen gallant adventures of which, perhaps, the persons to whom they were attributed were entirely ignorant; they made and undid several reputations.

At length the play began, but each word the actors said was repeated by the neighbors with such additions as the following, "Common! flat! detestable! pitiable!"

I confess the piece might have been better; surely if these gentlemen of the orchestra would only take the trouble to write a play it would be perfect in all points, for they are too keen as critics to fall into the errors they deplore; but during the whole representation my heart was smitten with pity for the poor author, criticised by such severe judges, and I made up my mind never again to take a place in the orchestra.

COLUMBINE AGAINST HER WILL

OR

A CARNIVAL ADVENTURE

WHAT a crowd is hurrying beneath these porticos, what noisy shouts awaken the echoes of this peristyle. It is toward one of the temples erected to folly that all these people are precipitately wending their way. Poor humanity, hasten to enjoy yourselves, your time for pleasure is all too short.

We are at the entrance to the bal d'Opéra. An Arab pushes the Grand Turk, who humbly begs a Savoyard to make way for him; Madame Angot takes precedence over a German princess; a shepherd insults a marquis, while a fishwife makes soft eyes at a troubadour. A chief of brigands keeps apart, for fear of being crowded, and an ingenue dashes bravely into the midst of the crush, dragging with her two Circassian maidens, to whom she says in a hoarse, raucous voice, "Do as I do, let yourself go."

I decide to do like the ingenue and I let myself go, the crowd bears me along and I find myself in the precincts devoted to folly; music adds to the delirium which seems to animate some masquers; dance tunes mingle with the continual buzzing of the voices around me. People walk and push and elbow each other; but they talk to each

other in familiar terms and this promotes merriment. Here one may say what one likes with impunity to a great nobleman; the slave laughs at his master, the negro and white man are equal; the great lady goes into a little box with a jockey, and more than one fool with cap and bells offers ices to a sultana.

But who is this Columbine who is walking about alone, and who so often comes back to the same place, where she seems to be waiting for some one? This young woman, girl or widow (history is not explicit as to that), after dazzling the world in an elegant tilbury, after having her box at the Bouffes, her bath-house at Feydeau, and several lackeys at her command, to say nothing of her admirers, whose number was, they say, infinite, had experienced a turn of Fortune's wheel; her admirers had gone to burn incense before other goddesses, and as a consequence her brilliant following diminished; no more boxes, carriages, jewels, servants — and yet the lady was still pretty, but fortune is capricious and love resembles it.

At the time of the carnival of that year there remained to this dame but a single gown fresh enough to adorn her charms; it was the anchor of her misfortune. In this dress she had made the acquaintance of an Englishman at one of the little theatres, he became smitten with her charms and told her so as elegantly as was possible to a man who spoke broken French. The Englishman

seemed rich and generous, she listened to him favorably and accorded him the meeting he desired, where she hoped to finish turning his head.

He was to see her at the Opera ball.

"How will you be dressed?" demanded milord.

"As Columbine," answered the lady, who knew that costume was very becoming to her.

"Columbine, very well, I understand; Columbine is very fashionable, I shall not forget it; and where shall I find you?"

"Near the orchestra. I shall put a pink ribbon on my arm; besides I shall recognize you, you will not mask."

"No, I never mask my face, it's bad for the digestion. You're deuced pretty! I shall dream all night of Columbine."

They parted. Our belle was delighted, she already saw herself again in a brilliant hotel with new carriages and jewels and servants, for milord had made the most tempting offers; she even counted on following him to England. She passed the night in studying the difference of the currency in London and went to sleep repeating: "I love you forever."

The next day she had to busy herself in studying how she might procure a fancy dress to go to the ball. She possessed nothing but a shawl and a gown; but an obliging neighbor carried those two articles to one of those houses which are so useful to the unfortunate. Meanwhile our young

woman, having only a short skirt and a white corset, was still building her castles in the air.

The friend returned; she had hired a very pretty Columbine's costume, and had enough money left to hire a cab and buy a ball ticket; that was all that was needed; the future was rose-colored.

The hour for going to the ball had at length come. Columbine was ready; she looked complaisantly at herself, she thought herself charming, seductive, ravishing. She must turn the heads of the three kingdoms. She got into the cab and reached the Opéra. The crowd was immense, but at last she reached the appointed place. She looked around — no milord. He was walking about, no doubt. The night passed, milord did not come. Poor Columbine!

Quite intoxicated by his success and taken up with his conquest, the Englishman had gone to some of his countrymen and told of his good fortune, and these gentlemen had gone to Beauvilliers, from whence they expected to go to the Opéra to admire the beauty who had proved so seductive to milord.

But what with deep drinking to the health of this beauty and to that of a good many others, and what with wishing to make themselves a trifle lively, that they might be more amiable to the ladies, these gentlemen had ended by going to sleep on the table — what with punch and champagne — and milord did not awaken until Ash Wednesday.

As to Columbine, obliged to regain on foot her room in a modest lodging house, the poor little thing could not get back either her shawl or her gown the next day; and she was forced to keep on her Columbine's dress, although the costume had lost all charm in her eyes.

DREAMS

OUR good ancestors believed in dreams, in visions, in cards, in spirits, in black magic and white magic, and in a thousand sorceries each one more frightful than the others. It is true that in the time of our good ancestors sorcerers were very common. They burned any quantity of them, and still they turned up at every corner. Since they no longer burn them, one no longer hears tell of them; it would seem that these people liked to be grilled.

We are less credulous than our fathers; however, the marvellous has still charms for us, and though we are rather incredulous as to spirits, we are not yet totally indifferent as to the meaning of dreams. A bad dream sometimes leaves a sad impression on our mind; and there are many people who are greatly affected by them and who look upon a dream as a warning which it is urgent to have explained, in order that they may not be surprised at events.

Ladies, above all, place much reliance on dreams;

anything that has a touch of the marvellous pleases their imagination, jaded by seeing in reality only the most ordinary things.

In all times dreams have had their interpreters, and it was in this occupation that the chaste Joseph won his brilliant fortune; necromancers do not make their way so quickly now-a-days, but people still consult them, and in default of them there are a score of books which give you in categorical succession the key to the "stuff" of which your dreams are made.

I have an old neighbor who ruined herself by investing in the lottery according to the numbers which her dreams gave her, which, however, does not prevent her having as much confidence as ever in her dreams. Lately, having had the misfortune to mention to her that I had had a most singular dream, she insisted upon my giving her the details that she might interpret them.

"Well," said I, "if I must tell you, I dreamed I was on the sea and yet I was a horse; I was flying, and yet I had neither wings nor a balloon."

"Good heavens, monsieur," said she, drawing a little book from her pocket — what a number of things she had in it! "I am going to tell you exactly what all that means. The sea, monsieur, is joy, and shows that you will easily be successful in all that you undertake; the horse is prosperity, expedition, brilliancy; to fly, monsieur, oh, I know that by heart — to fly signifies that a person

will raise himself above his rivals, that he will attain a high position. Your dream is magnificent; something fortunate must surely happen to you to-day."

I thanked my neighbor and begged her to lend me for a moment the precious book which taught the interpretation of dreams. These works rarely exhibit brilliancy in their ideas or style, but those things would be quite lost on their readers, who would understand nothing that was written in a romantic style. I read in this one that when one dreams of a bear, one is sure to meet some beast on his way; and as it is extremely rare to pass a day without meeting a beast of one sort or another, I do not doubt but that the interpretation is always correct. I saw that to dream of jumping over a ditch denoted that one would have a fall, and that to dream that one saw partridges was a sign that one would form a pleasurable connection with a lady. I was quite surprised, I will confess, to find that there was any connection between partridges and women. In short I read many marvellous things and I returned the book to my neighbor quite proud of having obtained the key to a good many dreams. But here you see how unlucky I was; even on this day that I had had such a beautiful dream I slipped on my staircase, and in falling I made a great bump on my forehead.

"Well, now," said I to my neighbor, as I showed her my poor head, "how can you explain

this accident? You assured me that something fortunate would happen to me."

"Why, monsieur, it seems to me you ought to be contented; you might have killed yourself and you've only got a bump on your forehead."

"I see that you are right," I answered, "but I must confess to you that I should not like to have such good luck very often."

THE PLEASURES OF FISHING

MONSIEUR BERTRAND was extremely fond of the sport of fishing and pretended to be an adept in catching fish. He had, so he said, done more wonderful things with a fishing-line than had been done since the Revolution. But I am assured that all fishermen are given to stretching the truth. However, M. Bertrand ought to have known something about fishing, because for some ten years past he had been in the habit of frequenting the Arsenal ditches, when they had any water in them; he passed his whole vacation there, either to watch the fish or dig for angleworms in the ground. When he had been the youngest clerk in an attorney's office, Bertrand, instead of taking the summonses, the notices, and requisitions to the sheriff, would go and establish himself on the Pont Neuf with a big reel to which he had affixed his line and fishhooks, and the head-clerk used to come and lead him off by the ear, because M. Bertrand

would forget all about his duties for a tench or a barbel.

As he grew older M. Bertrand had not lost his taste for fishing; with him it was a passion. A simple clerk in a government office, he had only Sunday upon which to take his ease and his pleasure, but he never passed one without going to establish himself on the banks of the Seine, except when the weather was too rainy to disturb the inhabitants of the deep. Suresnes, Nogent, Saint-Cloud, Sèvres, Passy, Autueil, Saint-Ouen, Saint-Denis, in fact, all the outskirts of Paris where there is fishing to be had, had been visited by M. Bertrand, who went as soon as the sun rose to establish himself with his line and his basket on the banks of the Seine, and usually stayed there until the going down of that orb.

At forty M. Bertrand, who was perhaps tired of fishing alone, thought he would take a companion. A young lady of twenty-eight accepted the homage of his heart; he was careful, however, to warn her that he was a great fisher, but that did not daunt the damsel, who perhaps really thought that he would supply her table with fish. The poor woman soon knew what to expect; every Sunday she had to follow her husband to his fishing, and she could not even talk to him, for the least noise would frighten the fish. M. Bertrand got in a very bad temper when he caught nothing, and invariably said it was his wife's fault.

The latter presented her spouse with a son, whom he brought up to go and dig for angleworms and search for crayfish.

In the most overpowering heat, as soon as M. Bertrand had time, they must set out and walk at least two leagues, for the fish will not stay near Paris; at least, so say the fishers. Monsieur carried his rod, line and hooks; madame carried a basket on her arm, in which to put the fish; and Fanfan closed the procession with a napkin containing some provision for their lunch.

M. Bertrand chose his place, then ordered the deepest silence. His wife must not even read, because she would make a noise in turning over the leaves. Fanfan must not even cough, under penalty of eating none of his papa's fish. Soon the sun reached the spot where the Bertrand family was seated. The wife and the little boy were stifling and demanded that they should go farther off, but M. Bertrand was undaunted and asserted that the place was too good to leave. However, it was half-past one, they had been there since six o'clock in the morning and the fisherman had not even caught a gudgeon.

"I'm hungry," said Fanfan.

"Hush! silence. Be quiet, will you," said M. Bertrand, casting out his line a little farther.

"But, papa —"

"Fanfan, if you talk, you shall be whipped when we get home. Ah, I think I felt something."

"But, my dear, this child is hungry."

"He will eat all the more dinner. Silence, Madame Bertrand, you've made me lose a good haul."

"We shall roast here, the sun is so scorching."

"Why, madame, I am in the sun, as you are, I say nothing. Hush, the water is disturbed. Ha! This time I have something!"

M. Bertram pulled in his line and for the third time he fished out a bundle of reeds. At length, at five o'clock in the evening, he had taken a barbel and three little white fishes.

"Is that enough to make a stew?" he asked.

"Yes, certainly," said his wife, whose only desire was to get away. They went to the village, went into a restaurant, the landlord of which smiled sneeringly when he saw the fish they had brought, and to accommodate them he charged them twice as much as he would have done had he furnished the fish himself. But while dining M. Bertrand incessantly repeated,—

"It is delicious eating, the fish of one's own catching; how fresh it is!"

But Madame Bertrand said to herself as they returned to Paris,—

"If I had a daughter, the poor child should not marry a fisherman."

A FANCY-DRESS BALL

SOME days before mid-Lent I received the following note:—

You are invited to come and pass Thursday evening at M——'s. He will have a piano and violins for those who are desirous of performing on those instruments. You may come masked or unmasked, disguise is not obligatory; there will be numberless diversions. The evening will finish with two pies; those persons who do not arrive before ten o'clock will have no supper.

The wording of this invitation and the signature of the one who sent it decided me immediately to spend the evening as suggested. The man who was to give the party was an old bachelor, who was in very easy circumstances, living on his means, having retired from business for some time past, and thinking now of nothing but pleasure; he liked everybody, but he liked those who were connected with the world of art especially, because he realized that their company was more pleasing than that of other people. So he always did his best to amuse them when he entertained them at his house, where the guests were invariably made to feel at home, and perfectly at their ease.

Such was the host of the evening; we may add that M—— was ambitious of being considered a joker, he loved to play tricks and engage in all kinds of buffoonery. Nor were his jokes always happy; but it was precisely this which gave me

the desire to go to his ball; for I was quite sure that the master of the house meditated some tricks which should amuse the company.

The only matter that troubled me was what disguise I should assume. Should I go in costume? Why then I should have to sustain the character I should take, play the part of some personage, speak and move and amuse other people. Now I thought it vastly more agreeable to amuse myself — I much preferred being a spectator to being an actor. Therefore I should not disguise myself.

So here I was before M——'s house, where there were neither lanterns nor a guard municipal at the door; but nothing was in question here but a bourgeois ball.

I went into the court; the porter and all the maids of the house had gathered in front of his lodge; probably these people were watching the arrival of the masqueraders who were coming to the ball.

The porter, who came out of his lodge with a baby and a boot on his arms, exclaimed,—

"What! a gentleman going to the ball and not disguised!"

"Have you been ordered to let none but those who are masked go up?"

"That wasn't what I meant to say. But it is much funnier when they are disguised. Up there are already two Lonjumeau postilions and some peasants and shepherds with Greek kilts. The

postilion's costume is very pretty, indeed. When my little fellow has been vaccinated I shall dress him like that every Sunday and take him to see his godmother."

I listened no further to the porter, I went up the staircase to the fourth floor, which was my destination; I thought I had got there, and I rang the bell; nobody opened, but the key was in the door and I went in. I was surprised to see no one in the antechamber, which was lit by a single lamp. Had I come too early? But no! it was nearly ten o'clock; and it was but a small, unceremonious affair. I decided to open a door that was in front of me; I took a few steps forward, some one uttered the most terrifying shrieks; I looked around, the cries became louder still and I saw a lady, middle-aged and dressed very coquettishly, who held a large net in her hand and some ringlets of a very fine black, which were probably intended to hide the gray hairs which I saw at this moment.

I could not make my excuses deep enough; but this lady appeared overwhelmed at having been seen without her net and her front; she looked as though she were about to faint; I was going to help her, when her chambermaid came running behind me, exclaiming,—

"Madame, the hairdresser is coming, he is still with Madame Feodille, who has pulled her hair down twice after he had done it up because she did not think it becoming. The poor hairdresser; for

her to treat him so ill after trying to make her look pretty."

"Good heavens," ejaculated I, seeing the mistake I had made; "am I not at Monsieur M——'s then?"

"No, monsieur," answered the chambermaid, "it's the same door on the next floor."

The lady to whom I had addressed myself did not answer, she had gone to hide herself in the back of the room. I hastened to leave, while the chambermaid laughed at my awkwardness. I went up one more flight; this time I was really at the ball. I could hear the sound of the music already. I went in; an enormously stout Turk came running to meet me; it was the master of the house. Imagine a very fat little man whose nose was almost hidden by two cherry-red cheeks above which were two little green eyes, which he rolled incessantly, and scraps of eyebrows which threatened to invade his forehead. Now dress this personage in wide trousers in big folds, a little velvet jacket adorned with spangles, which was cut up at the back and only just came down over his shoulders; put a great cashmere sash around his middle, and an immense turban on his head, and you will have our host. He looked at me for some moments, then he broke into laughter,—

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm a Turk, my dear fellow. I am stifling in this costume, but what of that? we must amuse ourselves. How do you think I look?"

"You look like one of those rocking figures."

"Don't I? ha! ha! we shall do some laughing. Come in, my dear fellow, they are dancing already in there. Oh, we shall have some fun; I'm just in the mood for it, for one."

"Tell me, have you invited your neighbor on the floor beneath to come to your ball."

"Yes, she is a very pleasing person and still very good-looking. But you'll see her — a brunette with beautiful hair."

I knew all about his neighbor's hair; but I did not think fit to undeceive our old bachelor, and I went into the drawing-room. The orchestra was playing loudly. Beside the piano they had two young men who played the violin, a little gentleman who breathed desperately into a flute, and a big jolly fellow who with his cornet seemed to be trying to make more noise than all the rest. There were not many people there as yet; the dancers were four, two of whom were little girls of six and seven years of age, dressed like shepherdesses, who were hopping about right and left under everybody's feet; then a very large powerful woman dressed as a sultana, who was making every effort to show a gentleman of forty how to dance a galop, who do what she would maintained a comic gravity and danced a galop just as though it were a minuet, despite all her efforts to animate him.

I looked around me. In the embrasure of a window were two gentlemen who held themselves

as stiff as pokers, seeming to fear that the least movement on their part would derange some part of their disguise. They were dressed as Chinese; their costumes were very fine; robes, trousers, sashes were all fresh and brilliant; nothing was lacking to their toilet; from head to foot they were got up quite like real Chinamen. I asked my fat Turk who these men were.

"They are very rich men; each of them has several houses in Paris — they are two brothers whose signature is very highly esteemed at the Bourse."

"That's all very well, but are they amiable, cheerful?"

"Yes, they are very rich; they have fine costumes, haven't they?"

"So far as that goes their costumes are magnificent! But why are they so silent?"

"I imagine they will get going later on."

"Have they been here long?"

"For more than an hour they have both been sitting like that — legs crossed and finger in the air, a Chinese pose, in fact, and they have never stirred."

"Hang it! those two jolly fellows will amuse themselves."

I saw at a few steps from me a gentleman dressed like a marquis and another attired as a chevalier who were sustaining an animated conversation. I approached them, thinking that they were acting

in accordance with the spirit of their rôle and I heard the following dialogue,—

"I tell you, monsieur, that the milkwomen cannot station themselves in the shops, it would be very nice for the shopkeepers really; my nephew is a perfumer and has a very pretty shop in the Rue Saint-Denis. A milkwoman carried on her business at a few steps from him; she wanted to carry all her boxes and her little jars into his shop, that would have been a pretty thing for him. There is nothing dirtier than these milkwomen with all their paraphernalia. How pleasant it would have been for people coming to buy Portugal water and almond paste to thread their steps among a lot of milkwoman's jars. My nephew sent her away very quickly."

"And where would you have these poor women station themselves?"

"Under carriage entrances."

"Under carriage entrances! you must be joking, I think. Why I have a very well-kept house, perfectly safe; my porter never lets any visitors in until he is perfectly sure where they are going, and you would allow a milkwoman to establish herself in my gateway that she should serve out her milk there and receive all her customers, all the maids and all the little girls, and all the street urchins who come to buy milk — very much obliged to you, monsieur. A house by that means would become a place of public resort. There would be

no safety, no propriety. No, really, I could not allow a milkwoman to come under my gateway."

"Where the devil do you want they should go, then?"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, I forbid you to talk politics," shouted the master of the house, darting between the marquis and the chevalier. "Dance with the ladies! Get the ladies to dance, why don't you?"

"And where are your ladies?"

"Here they are! they are coming in crowds! We are going to be as gay as possible!"

And the fat Turk laughed and slapped his rotund vest and ran from this one to that, doing his best to enliven those of the company who were not amusing themselves.

A tall gentleman came out of a neighboring room and began to walk about the ballroom. He was dressed in ordinary clothes, but he had on a false nose with heavy mustaches. He looked at everybody, and often looked at himself in the mirrors; he seemed to be persuaded that people must admire him. As for me I could not understand how at a society ball any one could disguise himself only with a false nose. This gentleman had perhaps intentions of a comical nature which would show later on. We would await the event.

The company soon came. Here were some pretty women, some Camargoes, some peasants, some vivandières; all these costumes were very

fresh, they were dainty, some of them were even distinguished, but I did not see one that was exact. Peasants do not get themselves up so daintily, and vivandières do not put such material as that into their petticoats. This person whom I see in a corner of the ballroom and who is loaded with a profusion of flowers, ribbons, laces, is no more an Italian villager than a bourgeoise of the fifteenth century. They sum up all disguises now under one head, "fancy dress." Fancy is all very well; but it is vexatious that these ladies have not the fancy to wear a costume that is exact and correct; ball costumes would gain thereby, and one would at least know whom each person intended to represent. And I regretted also that I did not see any disguises which would have given one a comical idea and enlivened the company; but it is far easier to disguise one's self in a fine costume and say, "Admire me," than to have a comical idea. There are, therefore, many people who confine themselves to putting on a handsome dress.

Up to the present the most jocular person at the ball was the man with the false nose. He walked gravely about the rooms and stopped in front of the ladies and seemed to expect that they would intrigue with him; but nobody spoke to him. It must have disappointed him greatly. I had an idea that his nose prevented him from seeing clearly, for I noticed several times that he bumped against doors and stumbled against chairs.

I was desirous of knowing, also, how he managed to keep his nose on without the help of a hat. Ah! a lady who is not disguised approaches him —she is speaking to him. I approach also and I listen; it is allowable in a masked ball.

"My dear, are you going to keep your nose on all the evening?"

"Yes, certainly."

"But it seems to me I see none of your acquaintances here, whom, then, do you wish to puzzle?"

"That has nothing to do with it; everybody looks at me, then they whisper. Didn't you notice that? Why, it produces an astonishing effect."

"It must bother you to have that on your face."

"No; it makes me squint a little; but that's all the better."

"But as there's no one here who knows you except M——."

"Let me alone; they'll begin to intrigue with me later on, I am sure of it."

"At least, my dear, you will take off your nose for supper."

"No, I shall not take it off. Besides, I've glued the mustache and the bridge of the nose with varnish. It draws the skin a little, but it holds perfectly."

"Shall I dance with you?"

"No, certainly not! Dance with my wife, you little mischief! Everybody here would recognize me."

"But as no one here—"

"Let me alone, I beg of you!"

The gentleman of the nose went ill-temperedly off from his wife and sauntered about, treading on everybody's toes. The master of the house was delighted; it was getting so crowded that no one could move in the ballroom; however, they wanted to dance. The fat Turk came and went, ran and shouted,—

"I'm stifling in this dress! we must amuse ourselves. We must make merry!"

The music was heard. The dancers took their places as best they could; they wanted to begin and tried to execute some figures; but their feet were glued to the floor, they could not detach their shoes. They looked at each other and asked how it came about that they had so much difficulty in moving their feet. The Turk laughed till he cried, he was convulsed, he rolled on to a bench; it was a joke after his own heart. He had distributed powdered tar with a lavish hand all over the ballroom so that the dancers could not glide their feet.

The ladies were inclined to be angry; and, in fact, it was singular enough to invite people to a ball and then to find a means of preventing them from dancing, Finally, M—— begged for pardon, and while they were dancing in the first drawing-room he promised to have the floor made practicable for dancing.

I went into a room where they were playing bouillotte; the stakes were very moderate, it was almost a family game. However, one of the players seemed to be greatly interested in it, after each hand he never failed to utter one of the following phrases,—

"I have lost! no, I haven't lost. I am within my money. Ah, I am not within my money. I have not won. Oh, I've got back my money again."

Ices were handed round; the gentleman with the false nose took one, but, thanks to his false mustache, could not get a bit of it into his mouth. After long and unfruitful essays to swallow a little vanilla without hair, he concluded to leave his ice on a corner of the mantelpiece.

A family in costume arrived; the husband was a Scotchman; and all the ladies at the ball made a frightened movement, but the Scotchman's wife, who was dressed as a savage, hastily reassured them. As to the lady, she had donned a kind of fur petticoat. I heard some people who were behind me say that it was made of a ripped muff.

Their two children, aged twelve and nine, came attired as old peasants and looked as if they wanted to cry because the curls of their wigs were continually falling about their eyes.

The marquis and the chevalier were still holding an animated conversation in an embrasure of the window. I thought they were talking about

what was taking place at the ball, but in passing near them I caught these words,—

"They must, however, bring my milk every morning. This has been my breakfast for forty years — café-au-lait. I positively must have my coffee."

"You could have it made with water."

"Much obliged! I should not sleep again for a year."

These gentlemen were still discussing perfidious milkwomen.

But the master of the house was now bringing everybody into his drawing-room, declaring as he did so that the ladies' tiny feet should not again be stuck to the floor. I saw our stout Turk laugh as he said this and I suspected some more mischief on his part; and all the more so because he had been careful to walk over every part of the drawing-room before giving his orders to the orchestra.

But the music was heard again, the flageolet, the cornet called everybody to the dancing. The gentleman with the false nose, who obstinately walked about among the crowd where nobody spoke to him, was jostled and pushed by the dancers. Little it mattered for him that he was squeezed and elbowed by everybody; he was sure that his nose set everybody else's at defiance, and this conviction was sufficient for him.

The signal was given, the dancers started off — but another event signalled this contra-dance. The

parquet was now so slippery that it was difficult to keep one's footing on it; it seemed as though one were dancing on a coating of very slippery ice. At the eighth bar three dancers measured their length on the floor; the father of a family who was disguised as a Scotchman was among the number. The Turk laughed more than before, but this time the dancers surrounded him, the ladies were very angry — they told him they could not see any joke in it. M—— had some trouble in calming his company and in getting them to forgive him for this new trick. Finally, every one became calm. The stout Turk had the soap powder with which the floor was besprinkled swept up and the dancing began again. But I heard a great lady disguised as a troubadour complaining bitterly at what had happened.

"It is very disagreeable!" said this lady to one of her neighbors; "my little boy who is a page was dancing just now, he fell down, as did several other persons, and he has torn his trousers. And here he is obliged to remain seated up to the close of the ball. It is very vexatious. I'm going to stuff him with cakes and ices to console him."

The two Chinese had not fallen, for they had not budged from their places, and they constantly held their fingers in the air. I admired the patience of these gentlemen and tried to imagine the pleasure they could find at this ball. At this moment a certain rumor was heard in the ballroom.

It was a new mask who had arrived. This was a young man dressed like a Spaniard, or rather a ridiculous travesty of one; his coat tattered and spangled, a fair wig which was much too short, a little turban and feather, and false calves in which he had stuck some artificial butterflies. I recognized a very witty young actress, one who thought, like myself, that at an affair of this kind those who made the most fun showed the best taste; but the Spaniard had not much success in the midst of all these people, who had no other thought in disguising themselves than to be admired. I even heard some ladies criticise the Spaniard's costume very loudly, exclaiming,—

"Good heavens! where did the man get such a costume as that?" But on the other hand they very greatly admired the two Chinese, who looked during the whole evening as though they had been pasted on to a screen.

A loud noise was suddenly heard in a part of the ballroom. It was the gentleman with the false nose, who had tried to drink some punch and was almost strangled by his mustache. He grew purple and everybody tried to help him. His wife came up and said,—

"He must take off his false nose, it is that which has made him swallow the wrong way."

Several young men seized the gentleman's nose. It was so well stuck on that they had to pull it several times to get it off. They managed to do so,

however. The pain which this gentleman experienced when they took off his mustache brought him to himself; but he put his hand up to his face and, furious at having lost his nose, he rose, pushed his way through the crowd, and left the ballroom followed by his wife.

"I did not wish to unmask," he said to her, "everybody has recognized me now. Let us get away from here! It was very nonsensical to take my nose off."

But the night was advancing, and several persons manifested a desire to see the two pies which were to end the fête. M—— had a sideboard set forth in the dining-room, where, in the midst of divers sweetmeats, they had placed the objects which had been announced.

"How original this gentleman is," said the ladies. "What an idea to offer us pie at a ball. Why, it is quite out of place, people no longer serve such things on these occasions."

"By Jove," said the men, "since he has provided nothing else for us to eat, we must needs taste those. They must at least be pâtes de Chartres."

M—— begged two gentlemen of the company to open them. I drew near the sideboard. I had an idea that our Turk had reserved a dish for us after his own heart. In fact, hardly had these gentlemen lifted the covers than from each pie issued a bat which put itself in motion. The ladies uttered piercing shrieks; they ran, they pushed into all

the other rooms, the greatest disorder reigned in the ballroom, and above all this noise one could hear the host's shouts of laughter, for he saw one of the bats attach itself to the Scotchman's wig.

This joke of course closed the ball. I went out at the same time as the bouillotte player, who kept saying all the way downstairs,—

"I only have my own money. I didn't win anything, I made nothing; I simply kept my own money."

A HOUSEKEEPER READING TO HER MASTER

MARGUERITE, push the table nearer, draw up my armchair and put some wood on the fire; I shall not go out this evening, the weather is too bad for me to go and watch them playing pool at the Café Turc. I am sure, however, they will need me to criticise the strokes."

"Oh, well, monsieur, then they won't be criticised, that's all. Do they suppose you are going to take cold just to please other people? and then you are so vain, you won't wear a black silk skull cap under your hat."

"Why, Marguerite, it makes one look as if one were ill — an invalid; and thank heaven my feet are still all right and my eyes are good, and my chest — hum! hum! hum! this confounded cough! Give me a little jujube paste!"

"Shall we play piquet or marriage, monsieur?" inquired Marguerite, when she had handed her master a little box of pectoral paste.

"No, I don't feel inclined to play; you shall read to me, Marguerite."

"Willingly, monsieur; but I hope you won't go to sleep, as you often do before I have read three pages."

"I shan't go to sleep; but try not to read continuously in the same tone, it is very monotonous."

"What do you mean, monsieur, by reading in a tone, I always read on the table because it is handier."

"I mean that you do not vary the inflections of your voice sufficiently."

"The influxions—what does that mean? Good gracious! you are getting hard to please, you didn't ask all that of me fifteen years ago."

"Fifteen years ago your voice was very much softer than it is now."

"That is, you were not quite so hard of hearing, you did not force me to shout then. Besides, if I no longer suit you, monsieur, you have only to speak."

"Now you are vexed; one can't say a word to you. Calm yourself, put on your glasses and read."

Marguerite, after muttering for some minutes, at length became calmer, and having put on her spectacles placed on the table several volumes for which she had been to look.

"Oh, we can take our choice to-day, monsieur, I went and got a lot from the library; what would you like me to read?"

"Anything you like."

"'Gil Blas de Santillane'?"

"I know it by heart."

"'The History of France'?"

"That is too dry for you."

"'The Royal Cook Book'?"

"One can't read that when one has just left the table."

"The 'Savant de Sociètè,' a pretty work that teaches parlor games and sleight of hand tricks?"

"What do you think I want with that kind of thing? At my age one has done with parlor games and cares nothing for sleight of hand tricks."

"The deuce, master! you are hard to suit; but here is a great novel in — in — oc — "

"In octavo, you mean to say."

"Yes, monsieur, and this ought to be better than the others, because it is the biggest, the cover is prettily ornamented, and it has a fine engraving."

"Oh, I know what that is, Marguerite; don't take up that story, you wouldn't understand it, nor I either."

"And why was it written, monsieur? why should they print books which nobody can understand?"

"Because it's the fashion, and there are people who assert that genius should not be understood by every one."

"You don't say so! and that old author I read to you so often, M. Boileau, who calls a spade a spade, he is not a genius, then, I suppose?"

"On the contrary, Marguerite, he was a great man."

"And that other who is so jovial, that Molière who says, 'I will beat my wife if it pleases me to do so, and not beat her if it doesn't please me.' Good heavens! how he makes me laugh with his comedies. He also calls things by their right names; do you mean to say that he wasn't witty?"

"Oh, he was a great genius, an inimitable man!"

"Well, how is it that I can understand all those genuises so well, and I get all mixed up with the new ones?"

"There are still authors who write so as to be understood, Marguerite, and the latter will be the longer read."

"In that case, monsieur, we will pass to something else. Ah, here is the 'Cavern of the Dead,' that's a pretty title, it turns one to gooseflesh only to hear the name; and the frontispiece! oh, monsieur, what a frontispiece. Just look here, a skeleton in a cavern with chains on his feet, on a rock, and with a belt of spikes, and this handsome knight who is looking at him with a torch in one hand and a kind of sword in the other; how brave he must be!"

"Perhaps it is a fossilized man he has just discovered?"

"Oh, no, there is nothing of the fossil about that. Wait, here are some words under it: 'I swear that I shall take no rest until my vengeance shall be complete!' Good God, is it the dead man who swears that?"

"Why, no, can't you see very well that it is the knight who wishes to discover the authors of the crime."

"Oh, is it the knight? Poor young man! he will take no rest. Then he won't even go to bed till he has found out who did the deed."

"That is a manner of speaking."

"Monsieur, I'll read you the 'Cavern of the Dead,' shall I not?"

"I'm not over fond of books that are filled with horrors, they are too gloomy."

"Pardon me, monsieur, I think they are very amusing. There are ghosts, underground chambers, poniards, changelings, lost fathers, brigands, magic, virtuous and innocent women who each have five or six lovers who kill each other for her sake; that is very nice, monsieur. It makes you shiver with fear, it makes you cry; no one knows why, but it is all the same; and the next day when I'm plucking a partridge I always have that poor heroine before my eyes. Oh, monsieur, books like that are very fine!"

"Well, since you like it so much, let's have some of the 'Cavern of the Dead.'"

"Are you ready, monsieur?"

"Yes, I am listening."

"Then I'll begin: '"How impressive is the approach of night under this gloomy foliage!" exclaimed the brave Albert as he was passing through —'"

"Marguerite, pass me my snuffbox."

"Here it is, monsieur. 'The brave Albert as he was passing through the wildest part of the Black Forest. The sun —'"

"It is deuced dry."

"'The sun —'"

"Marguerite, have you any snuff in your box?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Give me a pinch."

"'The sun had already passed over half his course when the knight had entered this frightful solitude, and since that time —'"

"Marguerite, try not to speak so much through your nose, it sounds to me like a 'cello."

"Something else now! 'that time these were the first words he had uttered. The gloomy silence of the sombre retreat had only been broken—'"

"Have you warmed my bed, Marguerite?"

"Yes, monsieur, —'been broken from time to time by the hooting of an owl or by the flapping of its wings, a lugubrious and sinister sound which seemed to add to the horror of the frightful desert and impress the mind with a superstitious terror. Suddenly he heard — suddenly —'"

"Monsieur! monsieur!" cried Marguerite, "it

seems to me that I heard somebody walking about the kitchen; did you hear anything, monsieur?"

But her master was already asleep. She went to him, shook him by the arm, and he awoke, exclaiming,—

"I protest that the ball was not close to the cushion—"

"What are you talking about cushions for, monsieur; why, we were in the Black Forest."

"Faith, I was at the Café Turc, my child! But your cavern has made me sleepy, I must go to bed and you'll read it to me some other time."

"Yes, monsieur, and you'll see how nice it is."

PARIS FROM MY WINDOW

IN the first place I must inform you that my window looks on the boulevard, not on that elegant boulevard which is the haunt of dandies and all the fashionable tribe, where is held every day a second Bourse; or where they decide what news shall be spread the next day in order to cause stocks to rise or fall, while apparently lost in admiration of a new equipage issuing from the Rue Lafitte.

Do not suppose, either, that I am relegated to the boulevards of the Marais, opposite the Rues de la Roquette or Saint-Sebastien, having in perspective nothing but old trees—very fine, it is true,

but also very gloomy — and cross walks often deserted but in which appear from time to time some of the respectable inhabitants of the "Rue du Pas-de-la-Mule" or of the "Trois-Pistolets." This neighborhood will probably become very cheerful, very lively, when the new Théâtre Saint-Antoine is in full activity; but up to the present you would rather, I am sure, that I should not stay there.

Take the medium between these two positions, and you will be exactly on the boulevard Saint-Martin; you will have neither the dandyism of the Chaussée-d'Antin nor the dulness of the Marais; but you will see a little of everything; you will have a small Paris, very cheerful, very animated, very varied, rather noisy on Sunday, but quite bearable during the week. A kind of magic lantern is passing before my eyes and I am going to describe a few of the slides to you, suppressing entirely those of "monsieur le soleil" and "madame la lune," because I never look at either one or the other for fear of making my eyes sore.

Let us place ourselves in front of the lantern, or, rather, at my window, at seven o'clock in the morning. This is the first picture.

Then the boulevard is almost quiet; the shops are not yet open, for what kind of shops are usually on a boulevard? Novelty shops, and shops where engravings, books, playthings, and bonbons are sold; manufacturers of billiard tables and other objects which people rarely go to buy at seven o'clock

in the morning; that is why all these merchants do not hurry to open their shops, they know that the persons who buy from them do not get about so early.

You will notice that grocers and wine merchants are very rare on this promenade; the corners of streets are especially affected by this class of traders, which is very fortunate for the boulevards.

On the other hand this promenade has a multiplicity of cafés. For my part I have one under me, one opposite me, one at my right, two at my left; and I can see two more a little farther down.

Without leaving my boulevard I can go into ten cafés. One may judge from that of the great number of these establishments in Paris. This is what falsifies still further the prophecy of Madame de Sévigné, who said that the café would pass away like Racine; or that Racine would pass away like the café.

And yet these places are daily becoming more brilliant, more elegant and richer than of yore (to the sight at least); as the eyes grow tired of the dazzle of the mirrors, the gilding and the gas, you will understand why the proprietors of the sumptuous caravanseries do not, like the wine merchant and the grocer, who sells a little glass to the messenger, get up very early. The waiters, tired by their labors late into the night, follow their master's example, and that is why the cafés are not open at seven o'clock in the morning.

Cabs and cabriolets are still rare; which lends at this moment a quietude which astonishes even the passers-by. Already the early workman runs to his work holding under his arm the third of a four-pound loaf which he will eat for his breakfast, and which would serve a man of fashion for six meals. But people who get up early usually have good appetites.

Here are some tardy workers; those who are out of work or who work by the piece; and then those who idle instead of working.

Two men accost each other. It is easy to see that these are workmen. One of them is respectable, has buttons on his jacket, and his cap placed so as to cover his head; finally, he has stockings in his shoes and his bread under his arm; the other has an old red cap slouched over one ear like a roisterer; he is untidy, his jacket and shirt are unbuttoned, his trousers look as though they were dropping off him, and to cap it all he has a pipe in his mouth. Let us listen to their conversation,—

"Why, where are you going in such a hurry as that, Poularde? Wait a minute, you shouldn't pass your friends without stopping."

"Why, is that you, Balochet? walking about with your hands in your pockets; are you keeping holiday too?"

"Why, my faith it's too late in the week, it's not worth while to begin. Come and have something to wet your whistle."

"I can't. I'm already a little late and the work is in a hurry."

"Come along, I say, are you afraid of being scolded, slowcoach?"

"I must work; I have four children to feed."

"Well, where is your wife? why doesn't she look out for that? It's beneath the dignity of a man to bother himself about brats. Look you, Poularde, a man ought always to preserve his own dignity. I'm an advanced thinker, I am."

"And I think of feeding my children, seeing that my wife has quite enough to do to wash their faces and look after them and cook the victuals for us all."

"Isn't it a woman's work to sweep the rooms and feed the brats? Jingo, Poularde, you are behind the times. Come into the wine merchant's — I'll pay for it."

"Thank you, I can't."

"You are still a famous skulker. You want to see things by our light, Poularde; look you, it's necessary to know one's rights and dignities — a man should command and walk about, and occupy himself with politics whenever he wishes."

"And the children will die of hunger meanwhile."

"Are not the women responsible for them? You don't understand anything about it. As for me, I must have my authority respected, and I am capable of going very far."

"You shall tell me the rest another day. Good-by, Balochet!"

"Listen now, Poularde."

The man who worked was already far on his way; the idler shrugged his shoulders and went towards a wine shop, muttering,—

"There's no way of making that fellow hear reason. One can never get anything out of him."

These two men are replaced by two young girls who before going to work come to get their measure of milk for their daily breakfast.

See this fat peasant lass with her full-blown face and great rosy cheeks, she comes every morning from Noisy-le-Sec, with her donkey loaded with tin cans full of milk and her little jars which she tries to persuade us contain cream. The donkey is placed in charge of some one, for donkeys are not allowed to stand on the corners of the streets or boulevards, for fear there should be too many.

The milkwoman is established against a neighboring house; she is surrounded by her jars and cans. There is a time when she is so hurried that she doesn't know whom to answer first; all the little girls, all the maids want to be served at the same time.

"My milk, Thérèse, I'm in a hurry!"

"My milk, Thérèse, I worked late last night and I need my coffee."

"Milkwoman, you haven't given me the right measure."

"And me, too, I have not had my little drop."

"My milk turned sour yesterday, I am sorry to say."

The milkwoman, always calm in the midst of this deluge of words, serves each one of her customers, assuring them that her milk is always excellent (when it turns it is the fault of the cows), and after she has got rid of the crowd which had besieged her she smiles at a good-looking young fellow in a very light costume who has stopped before her.

This is a baker's boy who has been carrying bread to his master's customers. You must know that bakers' boys are fond of laughing, and that they invariably have a weakness for milkwomen, that they think themselves very fetching, and that they make puns.

Milkwomen do not understand puns; but they laugh as though they did, and the baker's boy always has his special small jar when he wants to take coffee.

But the picture becomes more animated, Paris is awakening; the shops are opening. The young shopwomen are showing themselves at their doors still in curl-papers and morning shawls, and already curious to see if their neighbors have spread out any new wares.

The porters and portresses mark the distance like street lamps. Leaning on their brooms, they listen to the maids and distribute to them all the new scandals they have been able to pick up. The

Parisian porter is a notorious scandalmonger and has a vile tongue. I know of one of them who amused himself by writing anonymous letters to the tenants in his house; and, as he saw a good many things, he put discord into the households instead of sweeping in front of his door.

But it is getting late; the baker's boy picks up his basket of bread which he had deposited near the milkwoman's jars. He gives that fat tradeswoman one of his most seductive smiles, she answers him cheerfully, and then they separate; he to carry his bread, she to gather up her empty bottles.

The milkwoman is gone; she has taken her donkey and gone back to Noisy-le-Sec; the milkwoman knows nothing of Paris but the way which leads to the place where she sells her milk.

Now there are no more workmen, it is clerks whom we see passing. One walks briskly, his little roll in his pocket, his coat buttoned up to the chin, and talking to himself like a man who writes vaudevilles.

The other swings himself, loiters, looks in each shop window, stops when two dogs are fighting and in front of a house they are building and at the notices on all the lamp posts.

Some of them thread their way like a sky-rocket, looking neither to the right nor left, with a very business-like air, some rolls of paper under the arm, always well-brushed and with well-blacked boots. Generally the clerk is well-groomed.

But the time for employés passes very quickly. Here are the persons who go out on their own business. Neglected dress and muddy boots, that is recognized at once. If it is bad weather these people have no umbrella, while the office clerk never walks without one if the sky shows the slightest tendency for rain.

The smaller shopkeepers have spread out their goods on the sidewalk.

Here is a shop where they sell china, cups, teacups, plates, everything seems cheap; but you don't notice that these pieces are imperfect, that they all have some defect.

Who are these gentlemen in top coats buttoned up to the neck, and with caps with vizors which come almost down to their noses. By their accent, by the national mark imprinted on their physiognomies, you must immediately recognize the descendants of the great Abraham, the children of Israel, of that long-persecuted nation which has nevertheless made its way in the world. Generally speaking, persecuted people acquire either fortune or glory. The Jews are born buyers and sellers, and this is no reproach that I bring against them, quite the contrary, it is a eulogy to their cleverness; for commerce is the only true riches in the world. All other kinds are conventional. Gold, silver and banknotes have a purely conventional value which we put upon them. But commerce it is which causes them to circulate, which

affords employment to so many million men, and carries from one pole to the other our manufactures and the products of our climate. These are unconventional riches and give life to the others.

We say that the descendants of Israel are born with commercial instincts; as the Italians are born musicians; the English, thinkers; the Germans, smokers; and the French, mockers. At the age of eight or nine you will see little Jew boys walking along with a flat basket between them; they began by finding a pin, then they looked for others. When they had amassed a hundred they began to establish themselves in business, that is they set up as pin merchants, and in a few years the little pedlars will have a booth and later on a shop, then clerks, and who knows where it will stop. But let us return to these men who have stationed themselves in the boulevard.

One of the two brings out from under his frock coat a kind of folding stand of wood, on which he places a flat square box, of which the cover is raised and shows a heap of rings and pins with stones of all colors; you see that immediately makes a stall. This man begins to shout,—

"See, ladies and gentlemen, the choice you can have here. All fine jewels and fine stones set in gold. It's all stamped, gentlemen, all stamped; you may look for yourselves, I would not deceive you. Thirty sous for gold rings. Selling out for nothing because of a failure, now's your time."

While this gentleman is thus praising his wares, two of his comrades, acting the part of confederates, stop before his little stall which he has placed exactly in the middle of the boulevard; they appear to be busied in choosing rings and pins. Then they fumble in their pockets and drawing out a five-franc piece pay him for them, all of which goes on for a long time, because they hope it will attract some loiterers or better still some silly gudgeon, who will be led by their example to purchase a ring which he wants to give to his wife or his daughter. In fact, the loiterers stop, look, listen, but very few of them buy. The Parisian is becoming difficult to trap.

But besides the confederates who surround the stall and pretend to buy, there are others stationed here and there on the boulevard; they are pickets, charged with the duty of giving an alarm as soon as a policeman or detective shows above the horizon. It seems that these well-stamped jewels will hardly stand the scrutinizing eye of authority; for directly a picket gives the alarm, see with what dexterous celerity the jewel merchant closes his box, picks up his stand, and escapes through the passers-by. I have seen them, in their haste, let a part of their merchandise fall and not even stop to pick it up.

This will prove to you that very singular industries exist in Paris and that "all that glitters is not gold."

The carriages and cabriolets pass and repass; omnibuses, and other vehicles go by almost every instant. It is becoming so easy and costs so little to go about in cabs now, that I am surprised to see so many foot-passengers in Paris.

It is two o'clock, the busy scene is at its height. What a bustle and hurry, what a variety of people, what contrasts one sees in the faces and figures of all these personages. There, young and pretty women, elegant, graceful, out walking that they may win admiration for their faces and figures, here some poor pensioner trying to wrap herself in an old worn-out shawl.

Then a young man of middle age, having a fine mustache which mingles with his immense whiskers, with a goatee on his chin, in a hat rather pointed in the crown, from beneath which his hair floats in carefully frizzled curls. And over there an individual in a velvet jacket and trousers of the same, no waistcoat and very few buttons on his trousers and jacket; his shirt open in front, which allows this gentleman's chest to be seen, and informs us that he has a great resemblance to a bear, a knowledge with which we could very well dispense.

And this untidy person with his clothing unbuttoned, whose face is vinous and his walk tottering, talks aloud, often, even, he sings as he walks along and affects the use of the freest discourse and the most indecent words whenever he passes a virtu-

ous-looking woman or a young girl of modest appearance; and there is no one to arrest such a wretch. Are not these men who wish to thrust into our faces their vices, their infamy, their infected breath, as deserving of punishment as those street hawkers who have no licenses? In France they are not severe enough with this kind of offence, which is becoming extremely common since we are fortunate enough to possess the liberty which so many men translate into license.

But whom are this old couple who come round the corner of the boulevard and who seem to want to upset everybody in their way.

The woman is very ugly; and she is also very disagreeable-looking. She is tall, thin, narrow, dry and yellow; she has an immense bonnet on which there are massed flowers, ostrich tips, marabouts, tulle and great bows of ribbon. This bonnet must be fatiguing for anyone to carry, and when the wind gets under it the lady must necessarily have some one to hold her down to earth, or else her bonnet would cause her ascension.

But we have not yet seen all. Under the bonnet is a cap and the cap is adorned with artificial fruits. You know for some time past fashion has substituted fruits for flowers; this lady has doubtless thought that they match her face well, for she has on each of her cheeks a bunch of grapes, and another of red currants on her forehead. Imagine now this old yellow face surrounded with grapes

and currants and overshadowed by feathers and flowers and you will not be astonished that every one turns round as they pass by this lady and that some of them exclaim,—

"What is it? have you seen this big corpse which is going by?"

"Yes, it frightened me! It looks like a mummy walking along."

"Well, to me it looked like a monkey disguised as a woman."

"It is some foreign lady who is taking the air for her health."

"Good heavens! she looks as if she needed some health."

And the tall dame, who sometimes hears these remarks that are made about her, casts furious glances at the crowd and squeezes her husband's arm, saying to him,—

"Do walk along, M. Mollet, you dawdle among these low people — they might steal the shawl off my shoulders and you certainly would not run after the thief."

M. Mollet is a short, full-bodied, red-faced, knock-kneed man who constantly wears an entire suit of flannel and above that two shirts, thin drawers, thick woollen trousers, two waistcoats, a coat, a frock coat and an overcoat. You can understand that this enormous mass moves only with difficulty. When M. Mollet wants to get his handkerchief out of his pocket, he begins by sighing,

MONSIEUR AND MADAME MOLLET

Original Etching by William Glackens.

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then he stops, lets go of his wife's arm, gives her his cane to hold, and tries to make use of his hands; but he is never quite certain in which of his pockets he has put his handkerchief, and the examination is often so long that Madame Mollet ends by lending her handkerchief to her husband, who takes it with a grateful look and murmurs,—

"Thank you, dearest!"

M. Mollet resumes his cane and his wife's arm; and the old couple set off walking again, the lady persuaded that everybody should make a guard of honor for her because she wears a real India cashmere shawl; her husband, as stupid as his better half, thinking that every one is admiring his beautiful diamond pin and his handsome, gold-knobbed walking-stick.

I have no need to tell you that these people are neither counts nor marquises. True nobility may be haughty, proud, vain, but it is never ridiculous.

Rochefocauld said, "The accent of the country where one is born remains in the mind and heart as well as in the speech."

As for me, I think that one also keeps the "accent" of the occupation one has pursued; it remains in the manners and bearing as in the speech. This lady and gentleman were formerly bakers, and they have retired from business with thirty-thousand-francs income. Certainly people may be very estimable and yet sell bread rolls; but later on they should not give themselves impertinent airs.

Let us pass the old couple. Let us look at these children with their nurse. These rosy, fresh, nice children who jump and skip with so much pleasure before every toy stall. The little boy has a hoop and he wants to run it through the crowd which often bars the passage. The little girl has a ball which she throws before her that she may have the pleasure of running after it. But she is only three years old and the nurse should not let her run alone; unfortunately for the child, the nurse recognizes a countrywoman and it is much more agreeable to learn the news of her neighborhood than to run with a child to catch a ball. Five minutes have not elapsed when the little boy is upset in trying to get his hoop from between a mason's legs, and the little girl falls on her nose in running too hard after her ball.

The passers-by pick up the children, but the nurse does not even hear their cries, because her countrywoman is telling her of the marriage of her brother Jean-Louis with the miller's daughter; at length some one calls her attention to the two children who are crying and ask her if they are in her charge; she scolds them both and promises to whip them if they tell their mamma they fell down; and the children, with swelling hearts and faces smeared with dust, promise their nurse to say nothing; then the latter, to cure the bumps on their foreheads, leads them towards the cocoa-seller, saying to them, "Now I am going to treat you."

The cocoa-seller is a classical being, like the pleasure vender, and children are classical, for they always love pleasure and cocoa.

There is not a good popular festival or free spectacle, a line at the theatre, a review on the Champs de Mars, a fair in the outskirts of Paris, a procession on the boulevards but the cocoa-seller is there. Look at his silver-plated fountain, highly polished and shining, adorned with flowers, streamers of ribbon, and with tiny bells; he is a perambulating Samaritan.

The cocoa-seller usually has a nose as red as his apron is white, which would lead one to believe that the honest, hard-working man does not slake his thirst with his own merchandise nor eat up his stock-in-trade. But his appearance is pleasing and he walks sturdily along despite the fountain which he carries on his shoulders; he shouts in a voice that's rather raspy sometimes,—

"Who'll drink? Here's your fresh cocoa, who'll drink?" but he accompanies this cry with the shaking of his bells and goblets which produces a sort of Turkish tintinnabulation which is very pleasant to hear. I am surprised that they have not, as yet, employed the cocoa-merchant in the concerts-monstres.

But people are passing steadily along and we are letting some very original characters escape us; in the first place this little humpbacked gentleman who swings himself as he walks with so much

pretension, ogling the ladies with such a mischievous expression and imagining that they do not see the deformity in his figure because he is always dressed in the latest fashion.

People are walking faster, it is dinner time, and this rarely fails to accelerate their movements. This one is expected by his wife, who will scold him if he comes in late. The other is going to dine in town and must first go home to change his clothes.

An elegant cabriolet passes rapidly along the causeway, driven by a dandy; look out! he won't shout "Take care," he'll run over you if you don't get out of the way in time. Make way for him then, poor foot-passengers; don't you see that this gentleman is the promoter of a company who, instead of paying his shareholders, prefers to dazzle them?

One moment; here is a little, short, fat, thickset woman, who wants to take an omnibus. The conductor does not see her, the little woman is very unfortunate, she cannot shout because she has got a cold; she cannot run because she carries a basket and a cardboard box; she places herself in the middle of the street and plays the most expressive pantomime, until she hears coarse voices shouting in her ears,—

"Get out of the way, there!"

The warning is uttered by some men who are moving furniture, the poor dame is obliged to leave

the causeway and wait till it shall please Providence to send another omnibus—which Providence does every five minutes.

But where are this joyful couple going? Their faces are bourgeoise, their manners common; the woman has a cap, the man has earrings in his ears; they push aside all who stand in their way; they would upset stalls, booths, merchants, if they could, rather than fail to arrive at their destination.

They are small shopkeepers going to a play, to the theatre which they adore, and which their means do not allow them to visit more than four times a year. So they don't wish to miss an act, a scene, a word. They have chosen the theatre where they give the longest plays. At the "Ambigu Comique" there are now on the board three complete well-staged melodramas. Had another theatre offered four melodramas they would have gone there; but as up to the present no one has given more than three, our young people are going to the "Ambigu."

They arrive before the fireman, before the municipal guard; they see the barriers placed for the line; they see the workpeople go in; they are still alone before the office, and despite that they keep saying, "If we only have places."

We must not laugh at these people; the play will afford them a pleasure which we cannot understand, and which we shall never again feel, we who are disillusioned as to the scenery and we who

neglect to listen three parts of the time and see an actor only where they see a personage.

But night is falling; the cafés are being lit up, and shine resplendent with gas; the shops are becoming more beautiful, for it is rarely that merchandise spread out does not gain by being seen under the light. This is the real time for walking; in the evening no one goes out on business, but one goes out for pleasure.

This is the time when the gallant husband takes his wife to choose a floss silk shawl which he wishes to give her; and see how pleased these ladies look who are leaning on their squires' arms and pointing out to them the stuff for a gown or mantle which is charming under the light.

Behold also the clerks who are wending their way to the café to play their game of billiards or dominos, and those who seat themselves behind the railing in the boulevard to drink the beer which the waiter thoughtfully froths up so that a third of the bottle is spilled on the table.

How cheerful, gay, pleased and contented everybody is. Seen under the gaslight, in truth, the inhabitants of Paris seem very fortunate, and a foreigner who walks of an evening along our boulevards, so brilliant with shops and cafés, so enlivened by the theatres, the promenaders, and the strolling merchants—a foreigner must get a very favorable idea of the city and its inhabitants.

But appearances are often deceitful. These

men who go into the cafés for diversion will get heated with punch, will quarrel and perhaps go forth from them to fight; that married couple who seem so much in accord will go home pouting because monsieur has not satisfied all madame's desires; the merchants will shut their shops and complain that they have sold nothing all day; and the firemen will go home swearing because the theatres keep open so late.

Then, behind these young men who walk along singing and laughing at the close of a dinner they have been having at the Vendanges de Bourgogne, comes the poor father of a family who does not know how to go home because he has no bread to carry to his children, or an old man, ashamed and trembling, approaches you without daring to beg, but muttering some words that you quickly comprehend if you are at all sympathetic.

Then you feel that all is not joy that is before your eyes; that there is more movement than happiness in the scene; that some wish to assume a luxury beyond their means and others pretend to be embarrassed so as not to seem disobliging; that there is more ostentation than ease in these well-lighted shops; that there is more weariness than pleasure in the homes of these people who wish to look as though they were amusing themselves; in fact, that which is natural and free from affectation is what one least often sees in a big city, where people seem afraid even to walk or ride naturally.

But the plays are over; there is a few moments' trade for the pastrycooks, nearly all the habitues of the god's gallery want to be served with cakes; they make a line for a moment to have their merchandise all hot. The trade in cakes has greatly increased during the past few years; people make a fortune out of it in a short time. You may see every evening in the orchestra seats at the Opéra-Comique, among the faithful patrons of that theatre, a former cake merchant, which proves that while making his dough stiff he had had some taste for music; I am only sorry that he did not become a patron of the Bouffes.

People are becoming scarcer, the shops are closing, the gas is extinguished, some of the café lights still shine into the boulevard, but soon they also will be extinguished and of all this glow which illumines the boulevard there will remain only the street lamps which glare through the gloom.

Before leaving the window let us wait a moment. I think we are going to see something else, for those men are not walking about in front of that big house down there without a cause.

You think, perhaps, that I am going to make you a witness of a scene of robbery? Reassure yourself, that would be not at all laughable or interesting or new in a great city; you are going to see something more original than that.

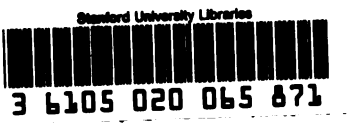
Wait a bit, some one opens a window on the third floor of the big house, and a man appears at

it and looks down on the boulevard; the men below shout to him, "Come, make haste!"

Bif! bang! bump! in a few seconds three mattresses are thrown out of the window, then a couch, then a commode and two chairs and two bundles come swiftly down on top of the mattresses. The owner prefers to see his furniture broken to having it sold. You understand now that what you see is the moving of a poor devil who has not paid his rent, and to whom the landlord has said that he shall not carry away his effects. The unfortunate tenant answered sighing, "I will not carry them away."

In fact he contented himself with throwing them out of the window, and those are two of his friends who are carrying them away. In a few minutes the moving is effected; and the next day the tenant will leave early in the morning.

You doubtless did not expect to see people move so late. But a great many things are done in Paris that we have not seen; and if these pictures have amused you, you may on some other occasion see what follows them by placing yourself at my window from midnight to seven in the morning.



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